



A Biography of the Best Man in Creation: Prophet Muhammad

May peace and blessings of Allah be upon him



And His Honorable Companions

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to my father, the one who taught me the love of giving, and placing others before myself, even when I have but little. May Allah's Mercy be upon his soul.

Next, to my mother, who taught me the pillars of my faith and the way to fulfil my religious obligations sincerely to Allah alone, and to love being His servant. May Allah's Mercy be upon her soul.

“My Lord, have mercy upon them, as they raised me up when I was little.” (Al-Isra' 24:17)

Finally, to my dear wife, who has been a constant support in all endeavors I have undertaken to serve my religion and to accomplish this modest piece of work.

Hassan `Ashmawy

*In the Name of Allah, the Most Merciful,
the Ever-Merciful*

Introduction by His Eminence, the Mufti of the Republic of Zimbabwe

All praise be to Allah, and peace and blessings be upon the best of creation, our master Muhammad (PBBUH), and upon his noble family and Companions

It brings us great pleasure to see the efforts made by our good friend and big brother, Dr. Hassan `Ashmawy, crystallized in this book.

This work, which was completed after several years of sincere dedication and perseverance, brings to light the early Islamic history, starting with the blessed biography of our noble Prophet Muhammad (PBBUH).

Dr. Hassan `Ashmawy has delivered a lecture series in several mosques across the country. This well-received and highly popular series has also been delivered in Zambia, Botswana, South Africa, and other countries.

Today, as we see this hard work culminating in this book, we feel it a blessing and a favor from Almighty Allah and, by His Will, a sign of acceptance of his effort.

Dr. Hassan `Ashmawy made these efforts and sacrifices to complete this work along with his main occupation as a medical surgeon. He exerted praiseworthy efforts in helping our people of Zimbabwe. He founded the Islamic Medical Association of Zimbabwe, with the aim of assisting the poor and treating them at no cost. The Association now has branches in most of the country's provinces. All thanks and praise be to Allah.

We ask Allah, the Most Exalted, to protect our brother Dr. Hassan `Ashmawy, and to bless him for the effort and work he is doing to serve Islam and Muslims. I am certain that this book shall provide great benefit and value to us all.

May Allah, the Exalted, accept this effort and make it a continuous success.

Sheikh Isma`il Musa Menk

Mufti of the Republic of Zimbabwe

Friday 26 Sha`ban 1434, 5 July 2013

*In the Name of Allah, the Most Merciful,
the Ever-Merciful*

Introduction by the Author

I begin with Allah's Name and with praise of Him, and I send peace and blessings upon His Messenger Muhammad, his family, Companions, and followers.

“My Lord, expand for me my chest, ease for me my affairs, and untie the knot from my tongue that they may understand my speech. I only desire reform so far as I am able. And my success is only through Allah. Upon Him I have relied, and to Him I repent.” With this Qur'anic supplication, I used to always begin my lectures in the City of Bulawayo, Zimbabwe, my place of work.

As a practical manifestation of my love and attachment for Messenger Muhammad (PBBUH) and his noble Companions, and feeling the need of people to know more about their religion and the life of their Messenger and his honorable Companions, I was prompted to organize and deliver this series of lectures about the biography of Prophet Muhammad (PBBUH) and his Companions.

By Allah's Grace, I delivered this program of lectures several times in all the mosques of Bulawayo and some of the neighboring cities. All praise be to Allah, the program was well received by Muslims in Zimbabwe. I ask Allah to make it a source of beneficial knowledge to the people and to accept it as a deed done purely for His Sake, and to increase by it the esteem of Prophet Muhammad (PBBUH), his family, and Companions.

After the completion of this series of lectures, the CD recording, and the distribution of them across the Republic of Zimbabwe and its neighboring countries, including Zambia, Botswana, South Africa, and others, I thought of

embarking on writing down the fragrant biography of Prophet Muhammad (PBBUH) and His Companions.

In the beginning, I hesitated, for what further value could I possibly add to the biography of the Beloved Prophet (PBBUH)? There is already a wealth of literature in this regard, written by grand scholars who are far superior and more knowledgeable than I am or shall ever be. But I recalled the Prophet's (PBBUH) words: **“Convey on my behalf, even if it is one *Ayah* (Qur’anic verse or hadith).”** (Narrated by Al-Bukhari)

Truly, Prophet Muhammad's (PBBUH) life is like an overflowing ocean, providing endless lessons, morals, and meanings, which require every effort and pen to express and articulate, especially in the face of regular malicious attacks launched against the Prophet (PBBUH) both recently and in the past. Such attacks against his character uncover deep ignorance, as well as a deep hatred of Islam and the Honorable Prophet of Islam (PBBUH).

This urged me to begin writing this prophetic biography and the history of his Companions.

The first part, *A Biography of the Best Man in Creation: Prophet Muhammad (PBBUH)*, will be followed, by Allah's Will, with an account of the lives of the honorable Companions – may Allah be pleased with them. I ask Allah, the Exalted, to grant me success and to accept this humble piece of work and make it beneficial. Indeed, He alone is the Praiseworthy, the Glorious.

Dr. Hassan `Ashmawy

Bulawayo, Zimbabwe

Table of Contents

DEDICATION.....	2
Introduction by His Eminence, the Mufti of the Republic of Zimbabwe ..	3
Introduction by the Author	5
The Objective of Narrating the Prophetic Biography	44
First: Learning and Extracting Lessons from His Life.....	44
Second: Reviving the Love of the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) in Our Hearts	44
The Companions and Their Love for the Prophet (PBBUH):	45
1. Abu Bakr Al-Siddiq	45
2. `Umar ibn Al-Khattab	46
3. Khubaib ibn `Adi.....	47
The Prophet's (PBBUH) Noble Lineage	48
Who Was Messenger Muhammad (PBBUH)?	48
Prophet Ibrahim (PBBUH)	48
His Birth and Early Life.....	48
The Dominant Beliefs of Prophet Ibrahim's (PBBUH) Time	49
First Round: Confrontation with the Star Worshipers	49
Second Round: Confrontation with the Idol Worshipers	50
1-Ibrahim's (PBUH) conversation with his people:.....	50
2-Ibrahim's (PBUH) conversation with his father:	51
3-Ibrahim (PBBUH) proving the falsity of what his people worshipped:	51
The Fire Becomes Cool and Safe for Ibrahim	52
Third Round: Confrontation with the King Worshipers	54
To New Lands.....	55
Migration to the Levant	55
Migration to Egypt.....	55

Ibrahim Given the Glad Tidings of a Forbearing Son	56
Migration to Makkah.....	56
Hajar and Her Baby Left with No Supplies.....	57
Life Blossoming in the Desert.....	58
Jurhum and Al-`Amaliq Populating the Valley.....	59
The Building of the Ka`bah.....	59
Ibrahim’s Footprint.....	61
The Story of the Sacrifice	61
Ibrahim (PBBUH) Surrendering to Allah’s Command and Satan Hindering Him	62
Ibrahim (PBBUH) Proceeding to Sacrifice His Son.....	63
The Return of Ibrahim and His Son (PBUT)	65
The Call to Pilgrimage	65
“I Am the Answer to Ibrahim’s (PBBUH) Supplication”	66
Isma`il (PBBUH)	68
Ibrahim (PBBUH) Advises His Son	68
Isma`il (PBBUH) Becomes a Prophet.....	69
Isma`il’s (PBBUH) Offspring.....	69
The Conditions of the Arabian Peninsula	70
The Religious Condition	70
`Amr bin Luhay Drags His Intestines in Hellfire.....	71
The Political Condition	71
Qusai ibn Kilab	73
Achievements and Key Aspects of Qusai’s Leadership.....	73
The Sons of Qusai	74
Hashim.....	75
Achievements and Key Aspects of Hashim’s Leadership	75
Umayyah Contesting Hashim’s Rule	76
Hashim’s Marriage.....	76
Al-Muttalib	76

ʿAbdul-Muttalib	78
Achievements and Key Aspects of ʿAbdul-Muttalib.....	78
1- The Re-excavation of Zamzam well.....	78
Glad Tidings for ʿAbdul-Muttalib	79
The Quraysh Objecting	80
A Miracle Supporting ʿAbdul-Muttalib.....	80
The Vow of ʿAbdul-Muttalib	81
The Ransoming of ʿAbdullah	82
ʿAbdullah’s Marriage.....	83
ʿAbdullah’s Illness and Death.....	83
The Elephant Incident.....	84
Attempting to Destroy the Kaʿbah	84
“The House Has a Lord Who Protects It”	85
The Confrontation Between Allah’s Army and Abraha’s Army	87
The Prophet’s (PBBUH) Birth	89
Abdul-Muttalib’s Joy Upon Hearing About the Newborn	90
The Prophet’s (PBBUH) Childhood.....	91
The Wet Nurses and Carers of the Prophet (PBBUH)	91
Halimah Al-Sa`adiyah.....	91
Mercy Descending upon Halimah	92
The Prophet (PBBUH) at the Age of Two – Weaned and Brought Back to His Mother.....	93
The Prophet (PBBUH) at the Age of Four – the Splitting of the Chest Incident.....	93
Back to His Mother’s Loving Arms	94
The Prophet (PBBUH) at the Age of Six – the Death of His Mother Aminah.....	95
Under the Guardianship of His Grandfather, ʿAbdul-Muttalib.....	95
The Prophet (PBBUH) at the Age of Eight – the Death of ʿAbdul-Muttalib	96
Under the Care of His Paternal Uncle, Abu Talib.....	97

The Prophet (PBBUH) at the Age of Twelve – His First Trip to Al-Sham	97
Bahirah the Monk.....	97
The Prophet’s (PBBUH) Youth and Early Manhood.....	100
His Youth Until the Age of Twenty	100
The Prophet (PBBUH) at Twenty – the <i>Fijar</i> War (the Sacrilegious War)	101
The <i>Fudul</i> Alliance.....	101
The Prophet (PBBUH) Around the Age of Twenty-Five – His Marriage to Lady Khadijah bint Khuwaylid.....	102
The Prophet (PBBUH) Trading on Behalf of Lady Khadijah	104
The Prophet’s (PBBUH) Marriage to Lady Khadijah	105
The Prophet (PBBUH) as a Husband	106
Barakah, “Umm Ayman”	107
Halimah Al-Sa`diyah.....	107
Zaid ibn Harithah.....	107
Zaid Prefers the Prophet (PBBUH) over His Own Family	108
The Prophet (PBBUH) Taking `Ali ibn Abu Talib Under His Care....	109
The Prophet’s (PBBUH) Children	110
The Prophet (PBBUH) at the Age of Thirty-Five – the Rebuilding of the Ka`bah.....	111
The Replacement of the Black Stone	112
The Prophet (PBBUH) at the Age of Thirty-Nine – the Marriage of Zainab	113
The Prophet (PBBUH) at the age of Thirty-Nine and a Half – the Marriages of Ruqaiyah and Umm Kulthum	113
The Stages of Prophethood	115
First Signs of Divine Inspiration and Prophethood.....	115
The Prophet (PBBUH) Meditating in the Cave of Hira’	115
The Beginning of Divine Revelation	117
The First Revealed Words of the Qur’an.....	117
The Prophet (PBBUH) Hurrying to Lady Khadijah	118

“Cover Me! Wrap Me Up!”	118
The Statement of Waraqah ibn Nawfal.....	119
The End of the Time of Rest.....	120
The Beginning of the Era of Prophethood	122
Ablution and Prayer.....	122
Suspension of the Revelation.....	123
The Beginning of Preaching Islam Among the People	124
The Prophet’s (PBBUH) Strategy of Calling People to Allah	124
The Foremost Believers	124
Some of the Honorable Companions Who Were the First to Join Islam:	124
Firstly, Early Muslims from the Prophet’s (PBBUH) Household	124
Lady Khadijah (RA)	124
`Ali ibn Abu Talib (RA).....	125
Zaid bin Harithah (RA)	125
The Daughters of the Prophet (PBBUH)	125
Secondly, Early Muslims from Outside the Prophet’s (PBBUH) Household	125
Abu Bakr Al-Siddiq.....	125
Men Entering Islam Through Abu Bakr	126
Early Muslims from the Notables of the Quraysh	126
Early Muslims from the Poor of the Quraysh	127
Early Muslims from Outside the Quraysh	127
Muslims Practicing Their Religious Rites in Secret	127
Openly Calling to Islam.....	128
First: Calling the Closest Kindred.....	128
Second: Calling Everybody to Islam.....	129
Abu Lahab’s Malicious Reaction to the Prophet (PBBUH)	130
Allah Responds to the Insult on Behalf of the Prophet (PBBUH).....	130
Worries Overwhelming the Chiefs of the Quraysh.....	131
The Struggle Between Truth and Evil	134

Firstly: The Quraysh's Scheme to Destroy the Call to Islam.....	135
1. Ridiculing and Belittling Everything the Prophet (PBBUH) Said and Did.....	135
2. Spreading Suspicions and Rumors about the Prophet.....	136
3. Distracting people from listening to Allah's Words.....	137
4. Persecuting the Prophet's (PBBUH) Companions	137
Instances of the Persecution Inflicted by the Quraysh upon the Muslims	138
Early Muslims were of two categories:	138
Abu Bakr Al-Siddiq and Talhah ibn `Ubaidullah	138
`Uthman ibn `Affan	139
Sa`d ibn Abu Waqqas.....	139
Bilal ibn Rabah	140
`Ammar ibn Yassir	140
5. The Quraysh Negotiating with the Prophet (PBBUH) to Induce Him to Abandon His Message.....	141
a- `Utbah ibn Rabi`ah Going as the Quraysh's Envoy to the Prophet (PBBUH).....	141
b- The Quraysh's Negotiating Delegation to Abu Talib.....	143
c- The Quraysh Threatening Abu Talib	143
<i>"Even If They Put the Sun in My Right Hand and the Moon in My Left Hand"</i>	144
d- Another Attempt by the Quraysh to Cut Off the Support of Abu Talib.....	145
6. Bodily Assault on the Prophet (PBBUH).....	145
a- Abu Lahab and his wife Umm Jamil	146
b- `Uqbah ibn Abu Mu`ait	147
c- Abu Jahl (`Amr ibn Hisham)	147
d- Attempt to Strangle the Prophet (PBBUH)	148
Secondly: The Prophet's (PBBUH) Plan to Counter the Quraysh's Abuse	149
1. Communication of the Message.....	149

2. Protection of His Companions.....	150
The First Emigration to Abyssinia	151
Abu Bakr’s Attempt at Emigration to Abyssinia.....	152
Abiding Under Allah’s Protection.....	152
The Return of the Muslim Emigrants from Abyssinia.....	153
The Second Migration to Abyssinia.....	153
The Quraysh Conspiring Against the Muslim Emigrants Inside Abyssinia.....	154
The Negus Insisting on Hearing the Muslims	155
One Final Attempt to Get the Emigrants Back.....	156
Hamzah and `Umar Entering Islam.....	158
How Hamzah ibn `Abdul-Muttalib Embraced Islam.....	158
How `Umar ibn Al-Khattab Embraced Islam.....	159
`Umar Decides to Kill the Prophet (PBBUH)	160
`Umar’s Heart Opening Up to Islam	162
The News of Umar’s Islam Spreading Across Makkah.....	163
Muslims Praying in the Open after <i>Al-Faruq</i> Joined Islam.....	164
The Quraysh Changes Its Strategy	166
Negotiations and Seeking Compromises	166
First Tactic: The Qurayshi Leaders Negotiating with the Prophet (PBBUH).....	166
1. Temptation Attempts	166
The Prophet (PBBUH) Frowns and Turns Away.....	167
2. Demanding Miracles to Strike Despair into the Heart of the Prophet (PBBUH).....	168
Second Tactic: Obtaining Concessions and Compromises from the Prophet (PBBUH).....	170
1. “ <i>Let us Worship What You Worship, and You Worship What We Worship</i> ”	170
2. The Disbelievers Seek Modifications to the Qur’an	170
3. Al-Nadr ibn Al-Harith	171
A Revelation in Clear Arabic Language.....	171

4. The Quraysh Ask the Jews About the Veracity of the Prophet (PBBUH).....	172
Do Not Say, "I Shall Do This," and Forget Allah's Will.....	173
The Answer to the Three Questions	174
A Question Poses Itself: What Stopped the Disbelievers from Believing?.....	175
Addressing the First Question:.....	175
Did the Quraysh Doubt His Prophethood?.....	175
1. `Utbah ibn Abu Lahab.....	175
2. Abu Jahl.....	176
3. Abu Sufyan, Abu Jahl, and Al-Akhnas	177
Addressing the Second Question:	178
Despite Evident Proof, What Prevented the Quraysh from Accepting Belief in the Prophet's (PBBUH) Message?.....	178
1. Rivalry, Spite, and Envy.....	178
2. Concern for Social Standing Among the Qurayshi Elite	180
3. Dread of Resurrection and Judgement Day	180
The Quraysh Imposes a General Boycott.....	182
Boycott Begins.....	182
Abu Talib's Reaction	182
Sufferance Inside the Mountain Pass	183
Sa`d ibn Abu Waqqas.....	184
Patrols Protecting the Prophet (PBBUH)	184
Preaching of Islam Continues, Undeterred by the Siege.....	184
Prelude to the Breaking of the Siege.....	185
The Siege Divides Opinion Among the Quraysh	186
Annulment of the Pact and the End of the Siege	187
Abu Talib's Illness and the Quraysh's Last Attempt for Give and Take on Both Sides.....	188
The Year of Sorrow	190
Abu Talib's Death	190

Khadijah’s Death.....	191
The Prophet’s (PBBUH) Suffering after the Deaths of Abu Talib and Lady Khadijah	191
Going with Islam to Al-Ta’if.....	193
The Harsh Treatment Inflicted upon the Prophet (PBBUH) on His Departure from Al-Ta’if.....	194
Collapsing the Two Mountains as a Punishment for the People of Al-Ta’if and the Prophet’s (PBBUH) Response to That.....	194
Winning Over a Convert: `Addas, the Christian Slave	196
The Jinn Comprehends What the Humans Have Failed to	197
The Return to Makkah	198
Introducing Islam to Tribes and Individuals.....	200
The Varied Reactions of the Tribes	200
Prophet Muhammad’s (PBBUH) Miraculous Night Journey and His Ascension to Heaven	202
The Buraq	202
Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) Leads All the Prophets in Prayer.....	203
Ascension to the Lote-Tree of the Utmost Boundary.....	203
The Prescription of the Five Daily Prayers	204
Some of the Scenes Witnessed by the Prophet (PBBUH) on the Night Journey and Ascension	205
The Return to Makkah	206
The Quraysh Denounce the Night Journey as False	207
Abu Bakr Believes the Prophet (PBBUH)	208
The Quraysh Challenges the Veracity of the Prophet’s (PBBUH) Account.....	208
Describing Al-Aqsa Mosque.....	209
News of the Caravans	209
Important Observations about the Prophet’s (PBBUH) Night Journey and Ascension	210
Firstly: Spiritual Leadership for the Believers	210
Secondly: Special Honor for the Prophet (PBBUH).....	211

Thirdly: The Night Journey and Ascension in Both Body and Soul.	213
Islam Finds Light Outside Makkah.....	214
1-Suwaid ibn Al-Samit.....	214
2-Iyas ibn Mu`adh	215
3-Abu Dhar Al-Ghifari.....	215
4-Tufayl ibn `Amr Al-Dawsi.....	217
5-Dimad Al-Azdi.....	218
Bright and Promising Souls from Yathrib	219
First Pledge of Al-`Aqabah	221
Islam's First Ambassador	221
Spreading Islam in Yathrib (later Madinah).....	222
As`ad ibn Zurarah: The Centre of the Islamic Call in Yathrib	222
Chief Sa`d ibn Mu`adh and His Clan Entering Islam.....	222
`Amr ibn Al-Jamuh	224
Second Pledge of Al-`Aqabah.....	226
Taking Precaution and Preparing for the Meeting.....	226
The Meeting Commences and Al-`Abbas Expresses Apprehensions	227
The Conditions of the Second Pledge	228
Impressing on the Pledge-Takers the Gravity of their Pledge	229
Swearing the Pledge.....	230
Twelve Representatives	230
A Devil Exposes the Meeting	230
The Quraysh Protests.....	231
The Quraysh Pursue Al-`Aqabah Pledgers	231
Emigration to Yathrib (Hijrah)	233
The First Groups of Emigrants	233
Aggression of the Quraysh Met with Sacrifices from the Emigrants	233
1. Abu Salamah and His Wife Umm Salamah.....	233
2. Suhayb ibn Sinan Al-Rumi.....	234
3. Umar ibn Al-Khattab, joined by the Oppressed Muslims	235

4. `Ayyash ibn Abu Rabi`ah	235
The Prophet's (PBBUH) Emigration.....	237
The Quraysh's Heightened Concerns About the Prophet's (PBBUH) Imminent Departure	237
The Quraysh Plotting.....	238
They Plot and Plan and Almighty Allah Also Plans	240
The Prophet's (PBBUH) Emigration Arrangements	240
To Abu Bakr's House.....	240
`Ali Sleeps on the Prophet's (PBBUH) Bed Instead of Him	241
The Assassins Surround the Prophet's (PBBUH) House.....	242
The Prophet (PBBUH) Leaves His House	242
The Emigrant to Allah Starts His Journey.....	243
Entering the Cave	244
The Quraysh Disappointed and More Frustrated than Ever.....	244
<i>"Do Not Grieve... Indeed, Allah Is with Us"</i>	245
The Miracle of the Cave	245
Three Days in the Cave	246
Enduring a Sting Rather Than Awakening the Prophet (PBBUH) ...	246
Out of Makkah and the Cave.....	247
On the Road to Yathrib.....	248
1. <i>"The Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) Drank Until My Thirst Was Quenched"</i>	248
2. <i>"A Man Showing Me the Way"</i>	249
3. Abu Bakr Constantly Guarding the Prophet (PBBUH).....	249
4. Suraqah ibn Malik.....	249
5. Near the Tent of Umm Ma`bad Al-Khuza`iyah	251
6. The Prophet (PBBUH) Presents Islam to Tribes along the Way	252
7. Arriving at Quba'	252
Departing from Quba'	253
Entering Yathrib – The Enlightened or Radiant City of the Prophet (PBBUH)	254

The Prophet (PBBUH) in Madinah	256
Inside Abu Ayyub's House	257
The Migration of the Prophet's (PBBUH) Household.....	258
Fever of Madinah.....	258
The Construction of the Prophet's (PBBUH) Mosque	260
The Description of the Prophet's (PBBUH) Mosque	260
The people of Suffah	261
The Prophet's Old and New Pulpits (PBBUH)	261
Azan (Call to Prayer).....	262
Seeing the Call to Prayer in a Vision by `Abdullah ibn Zaid.....	263
Bilal Calling to Prayers.....	264
The Establishment of the Islamic State.....	265
The Demographic of Madinah When the Prophet (PBBUH) First Arrived	265
Firstly: The Muslims of Madinah.....	266
Secondly: The Jews	266
`Abdullah ibn Salam Enters the Fold of Islam.....	267
Thirdly: The <i>Mushrikin</i> of Madinah.....	268
`Abdullah ibn Ubai ibn Salul – the Chief of the Hypocrites	269
The Prophet's (PBBUH) Method of Dealing with Political Challenges	270
Firstly: Uniting Al-Ansar	271
Secondly: Establishing Brotherhood between the Emigrants and the Supporters.....	272
Singular Instances of Altruism and Consolation Among the Companions	273
Among Traders.....	274
Among Farmers.....	274
Thirdly: Alliance Charter between All the Citizens of Madinah	275
The Cold Wars Between the Prophet (PBBUH) and the Jews.....	277
Firstly: Stirring Up Controversy and Raising Questions.....	277
Secondly: Attempting to Create Conflicts between the Muslims	278

Changing the <i>Qiblah</i> Direction	280
Challenges from the Outside.....	282
The Quraysh's Attempt at Assassinating the Prophet (PBBUH) in Madinah.....	282
The Quraysh Announce Their Intention to Prohibit Muslims from Visiting Al-Ka`bah	283
Permission to Fight	284
A Necessary Question: Did Islam Spread by the Sword?	285
The Prophet's (PBBUH) Confrontation Strategy against the Quraysh	287
Expeditions before the Battle of Badr	287
1. The <i>Sariyya</i> (Squadron) of Saif Al-Bahr.....	288
2. The <i>Sariyya</i> of Rabigh	289
3. The <i>Sariyya</i> of Al-Kharrar	289
4. The <i>Ghazwah</i> (Expedition) of Al-Abwa' (or Waddan)	289
5. The <i>Ghazwah</i> of Buwat.....	290
6. The <i>Ghazwah</i> of Safwan (the Minor Battle of Badr).....	290
7. The <i>Ghazwah</i> of Dhil-`Ushairah.....	290
8. The <i>Sariyya</i> of Nakhlah (Under the Command of `Abdullah ibn Jahsh).....	291
The Day of Doubt.....	292
The Prophet (PBBUH) Disapproves of the Expedition Fighting in the Sacred Month	293
The Quraysh Quickly Exploit the Incident	293
The Battle of Badr.....	296
Preliminaries to the Battle	296
The Prophet (PBBUH) Goes Out to Badr.....	297
The Muslim Army's Path.....	298
Abu Sufyan Takes Caution.....	298
The Vision Seen by `Atikah bint `Abdul-Muttalib.....	299
`Atikah's Vision Spreads with Speed Across Makkah and Abu Jahl Mocks it.....	300
Damdam Arrives in Makkah.....	300

The People of Makkah Get Mobilized and Stirred to War	301
The Strength of the Makkan Army.....	302
The Quraysh Fear Renewal of Their Hostilities with Banu Bakr	302
The Marching Forth of the Makkan Army	302
The Prophet (PBBUH) Learns of the Quraysh’s Advance	303
The Difficult Position of the Muslim Army.....	303
The Muslim Advisory Council.....	304
The Response of Al-Muhajirun.....	304
The Response of Al-Ansar	305
Abu Sufyan’s Flight with the Caravan	306
To Fight or Not to Fight – The Quraysh Differs.....	307
Both Armies Moving Closer to Each Other.....	308
Intelligence War Begins.....	308
Firstly: The Muslim Army Collecting Intelligence	309
‘Ali, Al-Zubair, and Sa’d Performing an Intelligence Collection Mission	310
Makkah Giving Away Its Most Precious Chiefs	310
Secondly: The Quraysh Collecting Intelligence.....	311
Sharpening of Divisions Among the Ranks of the Quraysh	311
Positioning of the Muslim Army and the Counsel of Al-Hubab.....	312
Establishing the Muslim Army’s Headquarters	313
The Night Preceding the Battle	314
Rainfall and Peaceful Drowsiness.....	314
The Day of the Battle	316
The Prophet’s (PBBUH) Strategy	316
The Quraysh’s Army Formation	317
The Muslim’s Army Formation	317
A Heartfelt Farewell by a Soon-to-be Martyr while Preparing for the Battle.....	317
The First Trigger for the Battle: Hamzah Kills Ibn ‘Abdul-Assad	318
The Challenge to Single Swordfights	318

The Two Armies Finally Meet.....	320
The Prophet (PBBUH) Humbly Pleading and Supplicating Allah	320
Signs Heraldng Victory.....	321
Confusion Among the Disbelievers’ Front Lines and the Start of the Muslims’ Counter-Attack	321
<i>“That Would be a Long Life!”</i>	322
The Angels Descending to Propel the Believers Towards Victory ..	322
Satan Withdraws from the Battlefield	324
Decisive Victory	324
Scenes from the Battlefield	325
The Muslims Reciprocate Past Kindness	327
No True Ties Except Those of Faith	328
The Final Outcome of the Battle	329
News of the Defeat Reaches Makkah.....	329
Back to Badr	331
The Second Day after the Battle	331
The Third Day after the Battle – Addressing Those Buried	331
The Glad Tidings of the Victory Reaches Madinah.....	332
The Death of Ruqaiyah, the Prophet’s (PBBUH) Daughter	333
The Spoils of War and the Captives	334
A Difference Regarding the Spoils of War	334
The Victorious Army Marches back to Madinah	335
Equal Distribution of the Spoils of War	335
Executing Two Captives as War Criminals	337
Kind Treatment of the Captives	338
Abu Bakr and `Umar Give Their Opinion Regarding the Captives...	339
Freedom in Return for Teaching the Unlettered.....	341
Free Pardon without Ransom.....	341
The Prophet’s Son-in-Law among the Captives.....	342
Allah’s Reprimand for Accepting Ransoming	342

The Outcomes of the Battle of Badr	343
Effects on the Muslims:	344
Effects on the Quraysh:	344
Effects on the Jews of Madinah:.....	345
Effects on the <i>Mushrikin</i> of Madinah:.....	345
Events between Badr and Uhud.....	347
First, Challenges from Neighboring Tribes.....	347
1. The <i>Ghazwah</i> (Expedition) of Banu Salim.....	347
2. The <i>Ghazwah</i> of Dhi Amar – Banu Tha`labah and Muharib	348
Second, Challenges from the Quraysh.....	349
1. Assassination Attempt on the Prophet (PBBUH).....	349
2. The Expedition of <i>Sawiq</i>	351
Third, Challenges from the Jews and <i>Mushrikin</i> inside Madinah	353
1. `Abdullah ibn Ubai Outwardly Embraces Islam and the Class of Hypocrites Emerges	353
2. Tension, Fear, and Enmity on the Part of the Jews	353
The Prophet (PBBUH) Is Anxious for Banu Qaynuqa`'s Guidance ..	354
The Prophet (PBBUH) Restrains His Anger and Honors the Covenant of Madinah.....	355
The Battle of Banu Qaynuqa`	356
Laying Siege to Banu Qaynuqa`	356
An Ally's Intercession for Banu Qaynuqa`	357
The Expulsion of Banu Qaynuqa`	358
The <i>Sariyya</i> (Squadron) of Zaid ibn Harithah	359
The Quraysh Take an Uncommon Trade Route Via Iraq	359
The News about Taking the Iraq Route Leaks Out to Madinah	359
Zaid Sets off to Intercept the Qurayshi Caravan.....	360
The Serious Predicament Facing the Quraysh	360
The Battle of Uhud.....	362
The Quraysh Prepares for War	362
First: The Material Preparation	362

1. Financial Preparation.....	362
2. Mobilization of the Combatants.....	363
Second: The Emotional Preparation.....	363
1. Using Poets to Stir up Men for War.....	363
2. Enticing Wahshi to Kill Hamzah.....	364
3. Women Encouraging Men to Fight.....	364
The Qurayshi Army Size.....	365
The Marching Out of the Qurayshi Army.....	365
Madinah’s Intelligence Discovers the Enemy’s Planned Action.....	366
Madinah Raised to Emergency Status.....	367
The Prophet (PBBUH) Consults with His Companions to Plan a Defense Strategy.....	367
The Prophet’s (PBBUH) Opinion: Staying Entrenched in Madinah.....	368
The Companions’ Zealous Opinion: Confronting the Enemy Outside Madinah.....	368
The Prophet (PBBUH) Responds to the Majority’s Zealous Opinion.....	369
Readiness for the Battle.....	369
Controversy and Blame for Opting for a Different Plan than that Advised by the Prophet (PBBUH).....	370
The Movement of the Muslim Army Exposes the Hypocrites.....	370
The Remaining Muslim Army Advances to Uhud.....	372
The Prophet (PBBUH) Positioning and Arranging His Troops.....	372
The Military Genius of the Prophet (PBBUH).....	373
Deployment and Boosting of the Muslim Army.....	374
Deployment and Boosting of the Pagan Army.....	375
Attempts by the Quraysh to Split the Muslim Lines.....	375
The First Attempt of Causing Division.....	375
The Second Attempt of Causing Division.....	376
The Fighting Begins.....	376
<i>Duel ...</i>	376
Flaring Up of Fighting.....	377

<i>Abu Dujanah and His Death Headband</i>	377
<i>Hamzah and His Strong, Brave Fighting</i>	378
Hamzah, Allah's Lion, Assassinated	378
Victory on the Muslim Side on the Morning of Uhud	379
The Archers Disobey the Prophet's (PBBUH) Orders	380
The Tide of War Turns Against the Muslims.....	380
Quick Thinking and Brave Action by the Prophet (PBBUH)	381
Death Rumor of the Prophet (PBBUH) Causing Chaos Among the Muslim Ranks.....	382
The Fighting Intensifies around the Prophet and His Injury	383
Talhah and Sa'd Put Up a United, Heroic Defense	384
Injuries Sustained by the Prophet (PBBUH)	385
The Companions Start Gathering around the Prophet (PBBUH).....	386
<i>"O Allah! Guide My People for They Do not Know"</i>	387
Unusual Scenes of the Believers' Resolute Fighting in Defense of the Prophet (PBBUH)	387
The Cessation of Fighting	389
The Prophet (PBBUH) Resumes the Struggle.....	389
<i>"Rejoice! The Prophet (PBBUH) Is Alive, Not Dead"</i>	390
Attempts to Hamper the Muslims' Retreat	390
Ubai ibn Khalaf Is Confronted and Killed	390
Retreat to a Safe Mountainous Pass	391
The <i>Mushrikin's</i> Last Attempt and the Empty Battlefield.....	391
Mutilation of Muslim Martyrs.....	392
Abu Sufyan's Challenge and Umar's Response	392
Abu Sufyan Wants to Confirm the Prophet's (PBBUH) Death.....	393
Abu Sufyan Tries to Absolve Himself of the Atrocious Mutilation ..	394
Abu Sufyan Challenges the Muslims to a New Encounter at Badr... 394	
The Quraysh Depart and the Prophet (PBBUH) Tracks Their Movements.....	394
Inspecting the Killed and Attending to the Wounded.....	395

Gathering and Burying the Martyrs' Bodies.....	395
Returning to Madinah	396
The Killed on Both Sides	397
Recapturing What Has Been Lost.....	397
The Expedition of Hamra` Al-Asad	398
Receiving Support from a Trusted Ally, Ma`bad Al-Khuza`i.....	399
Collapse of the Will to Fight among the <i>Mushrikin</i>	400
"By Allah's Mercy, You Dealt with Them Gently"	401
Was the Battle of Uhud a Defeat?	402
Lessons Imprinted by Uhud to Be Remembered for a Lifetime	404
Events that Intervened Between the Two Battles of Uhud and Al-Ahzab (4 A.H.).....	406
1. The <i>Sariyya</i> (Squadron) Led by Abu Salamah ibn `Abdul-Asad..	406
2. The Mission Executed by `Abdullah ibn Unais	407
The Quraysh Offering Prizes to Anyone Who Seizes Muslims	408
First: The Tragic Event of Al-Raji`	409
Killing `Abdullah and Selling Zaid and Khubayb	410
The Execution of Zaid and Khubayb	410
Second: A More Tragic Event Known as Ma`unah Well	412
The Prophet (PBBUH) Grieves over His Companions' Deaths at Al- Raji` and Ma`unah Well.....	414
Paying the Blood Money of the Two Men of Banu `Amir Wrongly Killed	415
Expedition Against Banu Al-Nadir	416
Banu Al-Nadir Conspires to Assassinate the Prophet (PBBUH).....	416
The Prophet (PBBUH) is Saved Through Allah's Protection.....	417
Consequences of Treason and Breach of the Agreement	417
`Abdullah ibn Ubai ibn Salul Incites Banu Al-Nadir to Defy the Prophet's Order.....	418
The Siege of Banu Al-Nadir	419
Ibn Salaul Turns His Back on Banu Al-Nadir and Their Eventual Surrender.....	420

Banu Al-Nadir Apply a Scorched-Earth Policy to Their Property....	421
The Spoils Obtained from Banu Al-Nadir	422
The Scribe of the Prophet's (PBBUH) Letters.....	423
The Expedition of Dhat Al-Riqā`	425
The Appointment at Badr	427
The Expedition of Dawmat Al-Jandal.....	429
The Battle of Al-Khandaq (Trench)	431
In Fervor for War, the Jews Declare Idolatry Better Than Islam	432
The Jews Inciting and Rallying the Confederates.....	433
The Vast Confederate Army Amassed and Marching towards Madinah	433
The News of the War Coalition Reaches Madinah.....	434
Preparing for the Confrontations Looming Ahead.....	434
Salman, the Persian, Suggests Digging a Trench around Madinah..	434
Commencing the Digging of the Trench.....	435
Miracles Occurring during the Digging of the Trench.....	435
The Hypocrites Attempt to Demoralize and Weaken the Muslims.	437
Completion of the Trench.....	438
Well-Planned Defense Strategy.....	438
The Confederate Army Taken Aback by the Trench.....	439
A Duel Resulting in the Death of a Veteran Opponent.....	440
A Spirit of Defeat Sets in Among the Confederates While the Believers Continue Steadfast.....	441
Huyai Entertains Fears of the Withdrawal of the Confederates.....	442
Attempts to Induce Banu Qurayzah to Renege on Their Treaty Commitments.....	443
Banu Qurayzah Break Their Treaty with the Prophet (PBBUH).....	443
The First Signs of Treason Start to Emerge	444
The Prophet (PBBUH) Investigates the Truth of Banu Qurayzah's Treason	445
The Prophet (PBBUH) Resorts to Policy	446

The Ansar Objects	447
Allah's Care Provides a Way out.....	447
War Is Indeed Stratagem: Nu`aim Provokes Distrust between the Confederate Forces.....	448
The Prophet (PBBUH) Beseeches Allah's Support	450
Allah Responds to the Prophet's (PBBUH) Invocation by Sending a Cold and Sweeping Wind.....	451
"Depart! I am Departing"	451
The Prophet (PBBUH) Seeks Confirmed Intelligence of the Enemy's Departure.....	452
Ultimate Military Decline of the Quraysh.....	452
The Battle of Banu Qurayzah	453
Laying Siege to Banu Qurayzah.....	454
A Protracted Siege Followed by Surrendering.....	455
Penalty for Capital Treason	456
The Aws Intercede for Banu Qurayzah.....	457
The Verdict of Sa`d ibn Mu`adh.....	458
The Death of Sa`d ibn Mu`adh and the Shaking of the Lord's Throne Due to It.....	460
Overview of the Military Activities that Followed the Two Battles up Until Al-Hudaibiyah Treaty.....	462
The <i>Sariyya</i> (Squadron) Led by Muhammad ibn Maslamah	462
The <i>Ghazwah</i> (Expedition) of Banu Lahyan	464
The <i>Ghazwah</i> (Expedition) of Dhu Al-Qarad (Also Known as Al-Ghabah)	466
The <i>Ghazwah</i> (Expedition) of Banu Mustaliq (Also Known as Al-Muraysi`)	467
Causes of the Battle	467
Proceeding for the Confrontation	468
Beginning of the Attack	468
The Hypocrites Inciting Clashes between Al-Ansar and Al-Muhajirun	469

<i>“When We Return to Madinah, the Honorable Will Certainly Drive Out the Mean”</i>	470
The Vile Remark of Ibn Ubai Reaches the Prophet (PBBUH)	470
Ibn Ubai Denies Having Said This Vile Remark.....	471
The Noble Qur’an Confirms the Account Given by Zaid	472
Return to Madinah and the Attitude Shown by the Son of `Abdullah ibn Ubai.....	473
The Prophet (PBBUH) Pardons Ibn Ubai.....	474
The Slandorous Lie against Lady `Aishah	475
Lady `Aishah Accompanying the Prophet (PBBUH) in the Expedition of Banu Al-Mustaliq.....	475
Lady `Aishah Gets Delayed and Misses the Caravan.....	475
Lady `Aishah Is Found by Safwan and Brought back to Madinah....	476
The Slandorous Talk Reaches the Prophet (PBBUH)	477
Lady `Aishah Falls Ill.....	477
The Prophet (PBBUH) Is Deeply Hurting for His Wife’s Sake	478
Lady `Aishah Learns of the Slandorous Rumors Related to Her	479
The Prophet (PBBUH) Consults His Companions.....	479
The Prophet (PBBUH) Asks Lady `Aishah Directly	480
In the face of Such Overwhelming Hardship, Lady `Aishah Opts for Patience	480
Divine Revelations Come Down Confirming the Innocence of Lady `Aishah	481
Applying the Prescribed Penalty for Launching False Charges of <i>Zina</i> against Chaste Women.....	483
The Beauty of Forgiveness.....	483
The Treaty of Al-Hudaibiyah	485
The Yearning of the Muslims for the Sacred House.....	485
Encouraging Neighboring Arabs to Join the Pilgrimage Journey.....	485
Marching Out Towards Makkah	486
The Prophet (PBBUH) Favors Peace and a Solution.....	487

Al-Qaswa' Is Stopped from Advancing Just as Allah Stopped Abraha's Elephant	488
Negotiations Start	488
1. Budail ibn Warqa' Al-Khuza'i	489
2. Mikraz ibn Hafis	489
3. Al-Hulais ibn `Alqamah.....	489
4. `Urwah ibn Mas`ud Al-Thaqafi	490
A Final Attempt by the Quraysh.....	491
The Delegates of the Prophet (PBBUH) to the Quraysh.....	491
`Uthman Acts as the Prophet's (PBBUH) Envoy	492
`Uthman Inside Makkah	493
Spreading of Rumors about `Uthman's Death	493
Al-Ridwan Pledge.....	494
The Return of `Uthman.....	494
Al-Hudaibiyah Treaty and Its Terms	495
Writing Down the Terms of the Treaty	496
Implementation of the Reconciliation Provisions	497
Abu Jandal, the Muslim Son of Suhail ibn `Amr.....	497
Dissatisfaction of the Muslims with the Treaty and the Strong Reaction of `Umar.....	498
A Manifest Victory.....	500
The Remarkable Outcomes of Al-Hudaibiyah Treaty	501
The Escape of Abu Basir	503
The Quraysh Relinquishes the Hardest Provision of Al-Hudaibiyah Treaty	505
The Prophet (PBBUH) Refuses to Send Back Emigrating Muslim Women.....	505
A Messenger of Mercy for All Humankind	507
The Prophet's (PBBUH) Letters to the Kings and Rulers of Foreign Lands.....	508
The Prophet's (PBBUH) Envoys, Bearing His Letters to the World's Kings	508

Khaybar	511
Reasons behind the Expedition	511
Marching Out to Khaybar.....	512
On the Way to Khaybar.....	512
Fear Strikes the Jews	513
The Main Fortresses of Khaybar	514
Camp Location of the Muslim Army.....	515
Beginning of Fighting and the First Signs of Victory	516
Conquest of One Fortress after Another	517
The Fortress of Al-Sa`b ibn Mu`adh	517
The Fortress of Al-Zubair Castle.....	518
The Fortress of Ibn Abu Al-Huqayq	518
The Fortress of Al-Nazar.....	518
The Fortresses of Al-Katibah District.....	519
The Treaty of Khaybar	519
The Prophet (PBBUH) Shows Magnanimity Towards the Jews in Strong Contrast with the Attitudes of Past Conquerors.....	520
The Booty Won in the Battle of Khaybar	520
Ja`far Returns from Abyssinia with the Emigrants	521
Another Attempt Made on the Prophet's (PBBUH) Life.....	522
The Remaining Jews of the Arabian Peninsula Submit to Peace Agreements.....	523
The Jews of Al-Qura Valley.....	524
The Jews of Tayma'	524
Heading back to Madinah	524
The Return of the Ambassadors of Islam and the Different Replies That Foreign Kings Gave to the Invitation to Islam.....	525
1. Reply of Heraclius, the Emperor of the Byzantine Empire:	525
Heraclius and His Conversation with Abu Sufyan	525
2. Reply of Khosrow, the Emperor of the Persian Empire:	528
3. Reply of the Negus, the King of Abyssinia:	530

4. Reply of Al-Muqawqis, the King of Egypt:	530
5. Reply of the Ruler of Busra:	532
Compensatory `Umrah	533
Muslims Reunite with Their Birthland After a Long Separation.....	534
The Quraysh Evacuate the City	534
Muslims Circumambulate the Ka`bah	535
The Three-Day Stay at Makkah	536
Back to Madinah	537
Khalid ibn Al-Walid, `Amr ibn Al-`As, and `Uthman ibn Talhah Come to Madinah as Muslims.....	538
Khalid Seeks and Finds Traveling Companions.....	539
Khalid and His Companions in the Presence of the Prophet.....	540
The Battle of Mu`tah	541
The Cause of the Battle	541
Preparations for Fighting, and the Prophet Directs the Army with Advice	541
Bidding Farewell to the Army.....	542
Marching forth to Gain a Surprise Attack Advantage on the Enemy.....	543
Muslims Consult Together to Decide the Best Course of Action	544
The Beginning of Fighting and the Martyrdom of Zaid, Ja`far, and Ibn Rawahah.....	545
The Banner is Taken Up by One of the Swords of Allah.....	545
The Prophet (PBBUH) Provides a Live Account of What Is Happening on the Battlefield of Mu`tah	546
A Calculated Manoeuvre Devised by Khalid Brings the Battle to an End	546
The Number of Those Killed, on Both Sides	548
The Returning Muslim Army is Shouted at with “Runaways!”	548
The Important Outcomes of Mu`tah.....	549
Expeditions and Delegations Continue.....	549
The Opening of Makkah	550

The Principal Cause of the Expedition to Makkah: Breach of Al-Hudaibiyah Treaty by the Quraysh	550
The Khuz`ah Tribe Seeks the Aid of the Prophet (PBBUH)	551
Gripped by Fear of the Consequences of Their Hostilities, the Quraysh Dispatch Abu Sufyan to Repair the Treaty.....	553
Abu Sufyan’s Intervention Attempt Ends Up a Failure.....	554
Carrying on with the Preparations for the Opening of Makkah	556
Intercepting a Letter Written by Hatib Disclosing Information to the Quraysh.....	557
The Prophet (PBBUH) Pardons Hatib	558
The Muslim Army Starts the March for the Opening of Makkah.....	559
The Departure of the Clan of Banu Hashim and Their Entry into Islam	559
The Muslim Army Camps at Mar Al-Zahran	561
Al-`Abbas Warns Quraysh and Abu Sufyan Reconnoitres the Area	561
Al-`Abbas Meets Abu Sufyan and Grants Him Protection	562
Abu Sufyan in the Presence of the Messenger of Allah.....	564
The Prophet (PBBUH) Takes Precautionary Measures before Entering Makkah.....	565
Abu Sufyan Witnesses the Strength and Organization of the Muslim Forces	567
Today is the Day of Mercy	567
Abu Sufyan Warns the Quraysh	568
Attaining the Manifest Victory	568
The Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) Inside Makkah	570
The Free and Universal Pardon	571
Handing back the Key of the Ka`bah to Its Keeper	572
Grievous Offenders Receiving Pardon	573
1. `Ikrimah ibn Abu Jahl:	573
2. Safwan ibn Umayyah	574
3. Hind bint `Utbah	574
4. Fudalah ibn `Umair	575

The Prophet's (PBBUH) First Actions in Makkah	576
Performing Azan and <i>Salah</i>	576
The Prophet (PBBUH) Preaches in Makkah	577
The First Sermon.....	577
The Second Sermon.....	577
Receiving the Pledge of Allegiance	578
Abu Quhafah, the Father of Abu Bakr, Accepts Islam.....	578
Dispatching Units to Destroy Idols in Arabia.....	579
Dispersing the Fears of Al-Ansar.....	580
The Outcomes of the Conquest of Makkah.....	580
The Battle of Hunain.....	581
Uniting and Allying Together against the Muslims	581
Veteran Experience in Warfare Exposes Faulty Decision-Making..	582
The Troops Led by Malik Entrench themselves in the Narrow Part of Hunain Valley	583
The Prophet (PBBUH) Sends a Scout to Investigate the Enemy's Intentions.....	583
The Muslims March from Makkah to Hunain	583
Coming Across the Tree called Dhat Anwat	584
The Muslims Approach Hunain Valley.....	584
The Enemy Ambushes the Muslim Army in a Surprise Attack	585
The Glee Shown by Some Recent Makkan Muslims.....	586
The Steadfastness of the Prophet (PBBUH) and His Unshakable Will	586
The Crying Out of Al-`Abbas to Regroup and the Return of the Muslim Army.....	587
The Tide of the Battle Turns in Favor of the Muslims.....	587
The Booty Gained from Hunain	588
Complete Defeat of the Pagan Opponents of the Prophet (PBBUH)	588
The Battle of Al-Ta`if	590
The March to Al-Ta`if.....	590
The Siege of Al-Ta`if.....	590

Attacking the Fortress of Al-Ta`if with a Catapult	591
Like a Fox Hiding in Its Den	591
“O Allah, Guide the Thaqif and Bring Them (to Me) as Muslims”	592
Releasing and Returning the Captives of Hawazin.....	592
Al-Shayma’, the Foster Sister of the Prophet (PBBUH)	593
Malik ibn `Awf Embraces Islam.....	594
The Portions of the Booty Assigned to Recent Muslims	595
The Reaction of the Ansar to the Large Portions Given to Recent Muslims	596
`Umrah from Al-Ji`ranah and Heading Back to Madinah	598
The Most Significant Events Between Hunain and Tabuk	599
First: The Poet Ka`b ibn Zuhair Embraces Islam.....	599
Second: Organizing the Collection and Distribution of <i>Zakah</i>	600
1. Scrutiny of <i>Zakah</i> Collectors	601
2. Verifying News before Reacting	601
Third: Dispatching Squadrons.....	602
1. The <i>Sariyya</i> (Squadron) Headed by Qutbah ibn `Amir	602
2. The <i>Sariyya</i> (Squadron) Headed by Al-Dahhak ibn Sufyan Al-Kilabi.....	603
3. The <i>Sariyya</i> (Squadron) Headed by `Alqamah ibn Mujzar Al-Mudlaji.....	603
Sporadic Events	603
1. The Death of Zainab	603
2. The Birth of Ibrahim	604
The Battle of Tabuk.....	605
The Byzantines Feeling under Threat from the Growing Power of the Muslims	605
The Byzantines Preparing to Invade the Muslim Lands	606
News of the Imminent Byzantine Attack Reaches Madinah.....	606
The Prophet’s (PBBUH) Decision to Take Decisive Action	607
The Prophet’s (PBBUH) Call to March to the Byzantines	607

The Reaction that the People Gave to the Prophet's (PBBUH) Call to Fight the Byzantines	608
A Summary of These Different Reactions and Attitudes	608
The Reaction of the Muslims	608
1. The Great Majority.....	608
2. The Few Who Stayed Behind	609
The Reaction of the Hypocrites.....	610
The Army of Distress	611
The Marching out of the Army of Distress	612
Significant Events Happening on the Road.....	612
1. The Hypocrites Making `Ali's Non-Participation a Topic of Rumors	612
2. Passing by the Land of the People of Thamud.....	613
3. Scarcity of Water and the Prophet's (PBBUH) Miracle of Increasing the Scarce Water.....	613
Stories of Some Companions and Their Altruistic Acts.....	615
a. Abu Khaythamah – Malik ibn Qais.....	616
b. `Umair ibn Wahb	616
c. Abu Dhar Al-Ghifari.....	617
d. Dhul Bijadayn.....	617
The Muslim Army Arrives at Tabuk and the Byzantines Withdraw	618
Treaties with the People of the Frontiers.....	619
Aylah.....	619
Jarba and Adhruh.....	620
Mina'	620
The Mission Assigned to Khalid ibn Al-Walid at Dumat Al-Jandal ..	620
Returning to Madinah	621
Dirar Mosque.....	622
The Men Who Lagged behind Tabuk Come and Make Excuses	623
1- Hypocrites:	623
2-Muslims:	624

a-Muslims with Valid Excuses	624
b. The Three Muslims Who Stayed behind without Valid Excuse	625
Worldly Punishment Is Lighter than That of the Hereafter	626
The Most Significant Events of the Year 9 A.H. and the Beginning of the Year 10. A.H	627
The Death of Umm Kulthum	627
The Death of the Chief of the Hypocrites	627
<i>"I Have Been Given the Choice, and I Have Chosen"</i>	628
The Wisdom and Farsightedness of the Prophet (PBBUH)	628
Decline of Hypocrisy	629
Abu Bakr Performs Hajj.....	630
Death of the Prophet's (PBBUH) Son, Ibrahim.....	632
The Eclipse of the Sun Coincides with the Death of Ibrahim	633
The Delegations	634
First: The Delegation of Banu Tha'qif.....	634
`Urwah Ibn Mas`ud Embraces Islam.....	635
Banu Tha'qif Sends a Delegation to the Prophet (PBBUH)	635
The Delegation of Banu Tha'qif Negotiates with the Prophet.....	636
Tha'qif Embraces Islam	637
Second: The Delegation of Tayi'	638
The Expedition Led by `Ali to Destroy Al-Fuls Idol.....	638
`Adi ibn Hatim Embraces Islam.....	639
Third: The Christian Delegations of Najran.....	640
The First Delegation.....	640
The Second Delegation	641
Al-Mubahalah Challenge	641
The Trustworthy Man of this Nation.....	643
A Last Invitation to Belief	643
Fourth: The Delegation of Tamim.....	643
Arrival of the Delegation of Tamim.....	644

Fifth: People Enter Islam in Throngs.....	645
Farewell Pilgrimage.....	647
The Prophet (PBBUH) Prepares His Departure for Hajj.....	647
The Muslims Proceed for Hajj.....	648
The Prophet (PBBUH) Delivers the Farewell Sermon	649
<i>"Today I Have Perfected Your Religion for You"</i>	652
The Prophet Completes the Rituals of Hajj	653
The Last Expedition under the Command of Usamah ibn Zaid	654
The Last Chapter in the Prophet's (PBBUH) Good Life.....	656
Prelude to Saying Farewell to This Life.....	656
The Prophet Pays a Visit to the People of Baqi`	657
<i>"I Have Chosen Meeting My Lord"</i>	657
The Prophet (PBBUH) Begins to Fall Sick	658
Despite Illness, the Prophet (PBBUH) Jokes with His Wife `Aishah	659
Despite the Pain, the Prophet (PBBUH) Visits the Houses of His Wives	659
The Fever Worseness and the Prophet (PBBUH) Walks Out to the Mosque.....	660
The Prophet's (PBBUH) Last Address to the People	660
The Last Days of the Prophet's (PBBUH) Life.....	662
The Events that Occurred a Day before the Prophet's (PBBUH) Death: On Sunday 11th of Rabi` Al-Awwal 11 A.H.	663
The Prophet (PBBUH) Talks with His Daughter Fatimah	663
The Prophet (PBBUH) Gives Away Everything He Possesses to Charity	664
The Last Day in the Prophet's (PBBUH) Life: Monday 12th of Rabi` Al-Awwal 11 A.H.	665
The Prophet (PBBUH) Goes Out for Prayer.....	665
The Joy of the Muslims at Seeing the Prophet (PBBUH).....	665
With the Highest Companion in Paradise	666
The Muslims React with Shock at the News of the Prophet's (PBBUH) Death.....	667

The Reaction of `Umar ibn Al-Khattab.....	667
The Reaction of Abu Bakr	668
The Reaction of `Ali ibn Abu Talib	670
The Reaction of `Uthman ibn `Affan.....	670
The Reaction of Bilal	670
Where Was the Prophet (PBBUH) Buried?.....	671
Washing the Prophet and Saying Farewell to His Pure Body	671
Prophetic Traits.....	673
Beauty of Appearance: The Prophet's (PBBUH) Description According to Authentic Reports:	673
Description of the Prophet's (PBBUH) Stature	673
Description of the Prophet's (PBBUH) Skin Color	673
Description of the Prophet's (PBBUH) Face.....	673
Description of the Prophet's (PBBUH) Hair	674
Description of the Prophet's (PBBUH) Shoulders and the Seal of Prophethood.....	674
Description of Prophet's (PBBUH) Palms and Good Scent	674
Beauty of the Prophet's (PBBUH) Manners.....	674
1. The Prophet's (PBBUH) Speech and Eloquence	676
2. The Prophet's (PBBUH) <i>Zuhd</i> (Detachment from the World).....	677
<i>"Even if They Place the Sun in My Right Hand and the Moon in My Left"</i>	678
The Prophet (PBBUH) is Offered to Have Batha' Makkah Turned into Gold.....	678
<i>"This World is Not Worth a Mosquito's Wing"</i>	678
<i>"Gather Me Among the Group of the Poor"</i>	678
Some of What Lady `Aishah Said About the Prophet's (PBBUH) <i>Zuhd</i>	679
The Prophet (PBBUH) Was Given the Keys of the Earth and Died While His Armor Was Mortgaged to a Jew for Thirty Measures of Barley	679
Description of the Prophet's (PBBUH) Bed.....	680

3. The Prophet’s (PBBUH) Generosity and Openhandedness	680
The Prophet (PBBUH) Never Said “No” to Anything that Was Asked of Him.....	680
The Prophet (PBBUH) Was the Most Generous in Ramadan	680
<i>“Spend, and Do Not Fear from the Lord of the Throne Decrease”</i>	681
The Prophet (PBBUH) Giving to <i>Al-Mu’allahafatu Qulubuhum</i>	681
4. The Prophet (PBBUH) Shows Patience and Forgiveness from a Position of Strength.....	681
The Prophet’s (PBBUH) Patience with the Harm Inflicted upon Him by the Quraysh	682
The Prophet (PBBUH) Does not Repay Evil with Evil or Insult with Insult.....	682
<i>“Have I Been Good to You?”</i>	682
<i>“O Allah, Guide My People for They Do Not Know”</i>	683
The Poisoned Sheep.....	683
The Universal Pardon	684
<i>“I Have Been Given the Choice, and I Have Chosen”</i>	684
5. Description of the Prophet’s (PBBUH) Bravery and Support for His People	685
On the Days of Uhud and Hunain.....	685
The Closest to the Enemy	685
Fright in Madinah	686
6. The Prophet’s (PBBUH) Modesty and Shyness	686
If the Prophet (PBBUH) Disliked Something, it Could be Perceived on His Face.....	686
The Prophet (PBBUH) Did Not Confront People with What They Disliked.....	686
Perfection of the Prophet’s (PBBUH) Modesty.....	687
7. The Prophet’s (PBBUH) Humility.....	687
The Prophet (PBBUH) Sat Where the Assembly Ended	687
The Prophet (PBBUH) Asked to Be Called ‘Allah’s Slave’	687
The Prophet (PBBUH) Visited the Sick and Attended Funerals..	687

The Prophet (PBBUH) Initiated Greetings and Honored Those Who Visited Him	688
The Prophet (PBBUH) Hated to Be Distinguished among His Companions.....	688
The Prophet (PBBUH) Jokes with His Companions.....	689
<i>“No Old Woman Enters Paradise”</i>	689
The Prophet (PBBUH) Gave Nicknames to His Companions.....	689
`Ali Eats the Dates with the Stones	689
The Prophet (PBBUH) Had Fun with Kids	690
8. The Prophet’s (PBBUH) Loyalty and Honesty	690
The Prophet’s (PBBUH) Extreme Loyalty to Kadijah.....	691
The Prophet’s Loyalty to Those Who Were Kind to Him	691
9. The Prophet’s (PBBUH) Fear of Allah and His Crying.....	691
<i>“If You Knew What I Know”</i>	692
The Prophet Used to Pray until His Feet Became Swollen	692
The Prophet (PBBUH) Used to Observe Much Fasting.....	692
The Prophet (PBBUH) Used to Cry a Great Deal at Hearing the Qur’an.....	692
10. The Prophet’s Mercy (PBBUH)	693
The Prophet’s (PBBUH) Birth.....	694
From the Age of Ten to the Age of Twelve.....	694
The People Ask for Rain with the Prophet’s (PBBUH) Face	694
The Prophet (PBBUH) at the Age of Twelve	695
The Prophet (PBBUH) at the Age of Thirty-Five	695
The Prophet (PBBUH) at the Age of Forty	696
After Being Entrusted with the Message of Islam	696
The Hostility that the Prophet Endured from the Quraysh.....	696
At Al-Ta’if.....	696
During the Journey of Ascension to Heaven	697
During the Prophet’s (PBBUH) Battles.....	697

The Prophet's (PBBUH) Action Towards the Man Who Urinated in the Mosque.....	698
The Prophet (PBBUH) Shortened His Prayer When He Heard the Crying of an Infant.....	698
The Prophet (PBBUH) in His Home	698
The Prophet's (PBBUH) Mercy Towards His Enemies	698
The Prophet's (PBBUH) Mercy Towards Inanimate Beings	699
The Prophet's (PBBUH) Mercy Towards Animals.....	700
The Prophet (PBBUH) at His Death	700
On the Day of Resurrection	700

The Objective of Narrating the Prophetic Biography

The objective of narrating the biography of the Beloved, Chosen Prophet Muhammad (PBBUH) is not to retell stories; there are important aims behind this piece of work, which are outlined below:

First: Learning and Extracting Lessons from His Life

The Prophet's (PBBUH)¹ life offers numerous lessons that we need to pause and reflect on. They should serve as a lamp and a guide for us to live by. If we wish to talk about the best teacher in history, or the best politician, or the best military commander, or the best father and husband, or the best healer of the hearts and souls – it is the Beloved, Chosen Prophet Muhammad (PBBUH). He is indeed the greatest of Allah's Messengers and the Imam of all prophets.

Allah, Glorified be He, describes him in the noble Qur'an, saying: "Indeed, you (Muhammad) are of a great moral character." (Al-Qalam 68:4)

We should drink insatiably of this river of knowledge and learn as many lessons and teachings as we can about both our religion and life's dealings.

Second: Reviving the Love of the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) in Our Hearts

The love of the Prophet (PBBUH) is not something optional or to be taken lightly. It is an obligation from Allah (Exalted be He) put upon every believer by His Words: "The Prophet is closer to the believers than their own selves." (Al-Ahzab 33:6)

¹ PBBUH, short for "May peace and blessings be upon him [English translation of: *`alayhi as-salatu wa-salam*]," is an Islamic honorific mentioned after reference to a Prophet of Allah.

A true believer's love for the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) should be greater and more deserving than their love for themselves.

The Companions and Their Love for the Prophet (PBBUH):

The Companions had full realization of the importance of loving Prophet Muhammad (PBBUH). Their love for him was greater than their love for themselves. There are numerous examples of this which will be explored further in the following chapters. Some of them are listed below:

1. Abu Bakr Al-Siddiq

- During the emigration journey from Makkah to Madinah (known as the *Hijrah* event), the Prophet (PBBUH) was accompanied by his Companion Abu Bakr Al-Siddiq (RA)¹. When they came across a cave to rest, Abu Bakr entered first to ensure there were no snakes or scorpions that could harm the Prophet (PBBUH). Abu Bakr then noticed the presence of several holes and gaps in the cave that could contain harmful insects and pests, so he started filling them all with pieces of cloth to avert any potential harm to the Prophet (PBBUH).

The Two Companions stayed in the cave for three nights. On one of the nights the Prophet (PBBUH) rested his noble head on Abu Bakr's lap and fell asleep. Suddenly, a hole that had gone unnoticed by Abu Bakr came into his sight. He quickly closed it with his toes. As his toes closed the gap in the wall, a scorpion in the hole bit his toe. Despite the pain, Abu Bakr stayed still. He just glanced at the Prophet (PBBUH) and his tears slipped onto the Prophet's (PBBUH) face and woke him up.

¹ (RA) is an abbreviation that stands for the Islamic honorific "*Radi Allahu `anhu*" (may Allah be pleased with him) mentioned after reference to one of the Prophet's (PBBUH) Companions.

When the Prophet (PBBUH) learned what had happened, he asked Abu Bakr why he did not withdraw his leg. Abu Bakr replied, “I was afraid that I might wake you up, O Messenger of Allah.”

A scorpion’s sting did not matter to Abu Bakr; what mattered was that he would not awaken the Prophet (PBBUH).

- On the same journey on the route to Madinah, Abu Bakr stopped to obtain some milk from a shepherd, and he gave it to the Prophet (PBBUH) to drink. Every time Abu Bakr narrated this incident, he said, “The Prophet (PBBUH) drank until I was satisfied.” The Prophet (PBBUH) drinking quenched Abu Bakr’s thirst, despite him not drinking anything himself. Such was his love for the Prophet (PBBUH), may Allah be pleased with him.

2. **ʿUmar ibn Al-Khattab**

It was narrated in *Sahih Al-Bukhari* that ʿUmar (RA) said, “O Messenger of Allah, by Allah, you are dearer to me than everything except myself.”

The Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) replied, “**No, O ʿUmar, not until I am dearer to you than yourself.**”

ʿUmar (RA) said, “O Messenger of Allah, by Allah, now you are dearer to me than everything, even myself.”

He (PBBUH) replied, “**Now, O ʿUmar (you are a complete believer).**”

After a moment of thinking, ʿUmar realized that his love for himself would add nothing to him on the Day of Judgement and Exposure before Allah. (Glorified be He) His love for the Prophet (PBBUH) would be much more beneficial. He would be the one who would intercede to Allah for him, and he would drink a mouthful from his noble palms, after which he would never be thirsty again.

3. Khubaib ibn `Adi

In the Expedition of Al-Raji`, the disbelievers of Quraysh captured `Adi and were in the process of beheading him, after having crucified and tortured him. While in that state, Abu Sufyan (a leader of the tribe of Quraysh) passed by `Adi and said to him, “Would you not rather have Muhammad in your place, to strike his head off, and you remain safely with your family?”

Khubaib gave a response that astonished Abu Sufyan and those with him, “I swear by Allah, it would not please me to be safe and secure among my family when even a thorn could hurt Muhammad.”

Abu-Sufyan, utterly stunned, said, “I swear by Allah, I have never seen anyone who loved their companion as the Companions of Muhammad loved him.” Then he ordered that he be killed.

Such was the love of the Companions for Prophet Muhammad (PBBUH). He was dearer to them than their own selves. Indeed, there are many examples of their sincere love that are beyond the scope of this book.

The Prophet's (PBBUH) Noble Lineage

Who Was Messenger Muhammad (PBBUH)?

His full name was Muhammad, son of `Abdullah, son of `Abdul-Muttalib, son of Hashim, son of `Abd Manaf, son of Qusai, son of Kilab, son of Murrah, son of Ka`b, son of Lu'ay, son of Ghalib, son of Fihri (Quraysh), son of Malik, son of Al-Nadr, son of Kinanah, son of Khuzaymah, son of Mudrikah, son of Ilyas, son of Mudar, son of Nizar, son of Ma`ad, son of `Adnan.

Before `Adnan were approximately thirty generations extending back to Kedar, son of Isma`il (Ishmael), son of Ibrahim (Abraham) – peace and blessings be upon them both. In our book, we will begin by exploring the conditions surrounding this lineage chain from Prophet Ibrahim (PBBUH) until Muhammad (PBBUH), and then discuss Prophet Muhammad's (PBBUH) life in detail.

Prophet Ibrahim (PBBUH)

His Birth and Early Life

Ibrahim (PBBUH) was born in the city of Ur in Iraq. His father was a skilled sculptor, devoted to making the various statues and effigies worshipped by his townspeople. His profession granted him a special sacredness and prestige among his people and community.

Ibrahim (PBBUH) grew up witnessing the stages involved in the craftsmanship of statue making. He (PBBUH) observed how very often the process would result in imperfect statues, not good enough for worship, and would be cast away or used by his father as firewood. He would then create another one in its place. This and other reasons were sufficient to make him question the legitimacy and rationality of idol worship.

The Dominant Beliefs of Prophet Ibrahim's (PBBUH) Time

At that time, there were three main forms of worship and belief systems:

- The worship of stars and planets (astrolatry).
- The worship of idols (idolatry).
- The worship of kings and emperors.

Ibrahim (PBBUH) never accepted any of these beliefs and always trusted in the existence of a Creator God, far greater and superior to anything that the people of his time used to worship.

His fixed resolution was to challenge the religious doctrines and beliefs of his time through evidence and irrefutable logic. He (PBUH) fought his battle in three separate rounds against these three existing false doctrines.

First Round: Confrontation with the Star Worshippers

The struggling of Ibrahim (PBBUH) started with the star worshippers. The Qur'anic Chapter of Al-An`am (The Cattle) contains a narrative of its events, in a soliloquy by Prophet Ibrahim (PBBUH) in which he contemplated the universe and admonished the star worshippers. Part of the soliloquy reads as follows:

“When the night covered him over with darkness, he saw a star. He said, ‘This is my lord.’ But when it set, he said, ‘I like not those that disappear.’ When he saw the moon rising up, he said, ‘This is my lord.’ But when it set, he said, ‘Unless my Lord guides me, I shall surely be among the erring people.’ When he saw the sun rising up, he said, ‘This is my lord. This is greater.’ But when it set, he said, ‘O my people! I am indeed free from all that you join as partners in worship with Allah.’” (Al-An`am 6:76-78)

Prophet Ibrahim's reflective speech was a way to logically prove to the star worshippers the error and falsity of what they believed and worshipped. How could anyone worship a god that would appear and disappear or rise and set?! He (PBBUH) repeatedly illustrated this fact by referring to the stars, the moon and the sun, hoping it would encourage his people to reason better. He (PBBUH) concluded his point with the following decisive statement:

“Verily, I have turned my face to Him Who created the heavens and the earth, a worshipper of Him alone, and I am not of those who associate others with Allah.”
(Al-An`am 6:79)

Second Round: Confrontation with the Idol Worshippers

Right after his confrontation with the star worshippers, Prophet Ibrahim (PBUH) embarked upon a new and even more difficult confrontation with the idol worshippers. The present battle was fiercer because of his father's deep involvement in this false form of worship – he was the one who crafted and provided the idols that Ibrahim's people worshipped. It was a hard-fought battle, which Ibrahim carried out in the following stages:

1-Ibrahim's (PBUH) conversation with his people:

Ibrahim went out to his people one day and talked with them. The Noble Qur'an recounts the conversation that took place between him and them:

Ibrahim (PBUH): “What are these statues to which you are devoted?”

Ibrahim's (PBUH) people: “We found our fathers to be worshippers of them.”

Ibrahim (PBUH): “Indeed you and your fathers have been in manifest error.”

Ibrahim's (PBUH) people: “Have you brought us the truth, or are you of those who jest?”

Ibrahim (PBUH): “(No), rather, your Lord is the Lord of the heavens and the earth Who created them, and I, to that, am of those who testify. And by Allah, I will surely plan against your idols after you have turned and gone away.” (Al-Anbiya’ 21:52-57)

2-Ibrahim’s (PBUH) conversation with his father:

A much tougher conversation followed with his father:

“O my father! Why do you worship that which hears not, sees not, and cannot avail you in anything? O my father, indeed there has come to me knowledge that has not come to you. So follow me. I will guide you to a straight path. O my father, do not worship Satan. Indeed, Satan has ever been, to the Most Merciful, disobedient.” (Maryam 19:42-44)

His father’s response was harsh, filled with threats and intimidation: “Do you reject my gods, O Ibrahim? If you do not desist, I will surely stone you, so avoid me for a prolonged time.” (Maryam 19:46)

In compliance with his father’s decree to expel him, Ibrahim (PBUH) decided to forsake his people, and what they worshipped instead of Allah (Exalted be He) hand move to another land.

3-Ibrahim (PBBUH) proving the falsity of what his people worshipped:

Prophet Ibrahim (PBBUH) was characteristically unswerving. Before setting out, he wanted to demonstrate to his people the falsity of their beliefs – as he had previously done with the star worshippers.

On a special day of massive celebration, all the people left the city to join the celebratory event on the other side of the riverbank. Prophet Ibrahim (PBBUH) waited until the city was completely deserted, then he walked towards the temple where the idols were kept. He (PBUH) directed his gaze at the food placed in front of them as sacrificial gifts and, addressing the idols, he asked mockingly, as

the Qur'an tells us: "Will you not eat (of the offering before you)? Why do you not speak?" (Al-Saffat 37:91-92)

He destroyed all the idols and left the largest of them, and placed the axe around its neck. The people returned from the festival and crowded to witness what had happened to their idol-gods. They sought to find who was responsible for such an act, when they remembered Ibrahim (PBUH) questioning and challenging their gods. The Qur'an relates it, saying, "They said, 'We heard a young man talking against them who is called Ibrahim (Abraham).'" (Al-Anbiya' 21:60)

They held an immediate court and started interrogating him. "Are you the one who has done this to our gods, O Ibrahim (Abraham)?" (Al-Anbiya' 21:62)

Prophet Ibrahim (PBUH) replied sarcastically: "Nay, this one, the biggest of them (idols) did it. Ask them, if they can speak!" (Al-Anbiya' 21:63)

And the court gave its verdict: "Burn him and support your gods – if you are to act." (Al-Anbiya' 21:68)

Ibrahim's (PBUH) people arrogantly defied the clear proof and logic that Ibrahim (PBUH) put forward. Their decision was to put him to death by throwing him alive into a blazing fire.

The Fire Becomes Cool and Safe for Ibrahim

Carrying out the court's judgement, the people dug an immense hole and filled it with stones and wood, before setting the fire alight. A huge catapult-like device was set up to thrust Ibrahim (PBBUH) into the fire, as the extreme heat would make it impossible for anyone to approach the fire.

After tying Ibrahim's (PBBUH) legs and hands, they put him into the catapult. When the decisive moment came, Angel Jibril (Gabriel, PBUH)

descended and asked Ibrahim (PBUH): “O Ibrahim, do you need anything?” Ibrahim (PBUH) replied, “Allah is Sufficient for me, and He is the Best Disposer of my affairs!”

The catapult threw Ibrahim (PBBUH) into the fire pit in execution of the court’s unjust decree. But Allah (Exalted be He) was at work. The court passed its judgement, and Allah also. The Supreme, Almighty and Irresistible Lord gave orders to the fire: “O fire! Be you coolness and safety for Ibrahim (Abraham)!” (Al-Anbiya’ 21:69)

This was Allah’s Command. Indeed, He is the Unconquerable and Almighty Creator. He (Glorified be He) created the fire and caused it to operate based on certain physical qualities. Allah gave orders to the fire they had lit to cease its physical qualities as fire. It did not burn or destroy anything except the chains that Ibrahim (PBUH) was tied with. It became cool and safe for him. It not only became cold, for this could have caused Ibrahim to freeze, but also peacefully safe. Ibrahim (PBBUH) sat within it as if he was sitting in a verdant garden.

After long period waiting, watching, and anticipating, the people who gathered around the fire expected to see Ibrahim’s (PBUH) body dead and charred. To everyone’s astonishment, after the fire died down, Ibrahim (PBBUH) stepped out of it just as he had been thrust into it, unscathed, his face bright and glistening. His clothes remained the same; unburned and intact, while the onlookers’ clothes were partially seared due to the sparks and flaming wooden fragments that flew onto them.

Indeed, the court ruling was a grievous fabrication of truth. It incurred a devastating loss to those who disbelieved in Ibrahim (PBBUH) and his message of Allah’s Oneness. “They intended for him harm, but We* (Allah) made them the worst losers.” (Al-Anbiya’ 21:70)

* Royal We used by Allah in the Qur’an to denote majesty and power.

Third Round: Confrontation with the King Worshippers

In this struggle, Ibrahim (PBBUH) headed directly to the leader of *Shirk* (associating others with Allah in His Divinity or worship) at the time, namely King Nimrod, whom people worshipped instead of Allah (Glorified be He). He argued with him and challenged his claim to Godhood, and the following conversation took place between the two as Allah, the Most Exalted, relates to us in the Glorious Qur'an: "Have you not looked at him who disputed with Ibrahim (Abraham) about his Lord (Allah), (merely) because Allah had given him kingship? When Ibrahim said (to him), 'My Lord (Allah) is He Who gives life and causes death.' He said, 'I give life and cause death.'" (Al-Baqarah 2:258)

Ibrahim (PBBUH) did not pursue this lengthy, useless debate further, and instead gave him this prompt, conclusive response: "Ibrahim said, 'Verily! Allah causes the sun to rise from the east, so, you cause it you to rise from the west.' So the disbeliever was overwhelmed by astonishment. And Allah guides not the wrongdoers." (Al-Baqarah 2:258)

It was a decisive response that brought the argument to a close with a king whose name and place the Qur'anic verses do not care to mention.

To New Lands

After Ibrahim's (PBBUH) long struggles with all forms of *Shirk* and disbelief, and despite the clear miraculous signs establishing the veracity of his message, Ibrahim (PBUH) left for other lands to call people to belief in the One and Only God - Allah (Exalted be He).

Ibrahim (PBBUH) left, but he did not have thousands or hundreds of followers who had believed in him. He departed without a man in his company except Lut (Lout, PBBUH), his nephew. Lut was the only person who went with him and followed his religion.

There is a lesson to be learned here: a caller to Allah's Path should never give up or be disheartened, as Prophet Muhammad (PBBUH) said: **“That Allah guides one person through you is better for you than red camels (i.e., the most prized possessions of this world).”** (Sahih Al-Bukhari) Far from giving up or despairing, Prophet Ibrahim persevered in his journey, calling people to Allah's Path. Today, and after thousands of years, we see the result of Ibrahim's dedicated efforts. They have blossomed into billions of believers, who are all followers of Ibrahim (PBBUH). Glorified be Allah!

Migration to the Levant

Prophet Ibrahim (PBBUH) migrated from Ur in Iraq to the Levant (Damascus), and then to Palestine, where he stayed in Hebron (known as Al-Khalil in Arabic). There, he (PBBUH) met and married his wife Sarah. He spent some time there calling people to believe in and worship the one and only God – Allah (Exalted be He).

Migration to Egypt

Prophet Ibrahim (PBBUH) travelled to Egypt with his wife Sarah. There he met with the King of Egypt, who presented him with Hajar, who became his

second wife. Hajar was the daughter of a king whom the Egyptian King defeated in a battle, after which he took Hajar captive. The Egyptian King treated the princess well and gifted her to Ibrahim (PBBUH), so she would not be treated as a slave.

Ibrahim Given the Glad Tidings of a Forbearing Son

Prophet Ibrahim (PBBUH) attained the age of seventy without yet being blessed with offspring. When he married Hajar, the Egyptian, he supplicated to Allah: “My Lord, grant me (offspring) from the righteous.” (Al-Saffat 37:100) Allah’s swift answer to his supplication came: “So We gave him the glad tidings of a forbearing boy.” (Al-Saffat 37:101)

Allah granted him his son Isma`il (Ishmael, PBBUH), whose name in Hebrew means “Allah hears”. Isma`il (PBBUH) was the fulfilment of Ibrahim’s request. Following this, Ibrahim (PBBUH) returned to Palestine with his family.

Migration to Makkah

Ibrahim (PBBUH) carried on calling people to Allah’s Path. One day he received Allah’s Command that he should depart for Makkah with his wife Hajar and their son Isma`il, who was still a baby.

Ibrahim (PBBUH) had no idea what or where Makkah was, but he knew he must obey Allah’s Orders. So off he went to Makkah, guided by the clouds, as later also happened with beloved Prophet Muhammed (PBBUH) on his migration journey.

Ibrahim (PBBUH) arrived in Makkah only to find it a harsh, uncultivated desert land with no signs of life. Ibrahim (PBBUH) spent very little time there with his wife and little child before once again Allah (Exalted be He) ordered him to depart, leaving behind his wife and son with a small supply of food and water.

Hajar hurried after her travelling husband and asked him, “O Ibrahim, where are you going and leaving us in this valley, in which there are no people and nothing?” She asked him this question several times, but he (PBBUH) did not answer her. Finally, she asked him, “Is it Allah Who has commanded you to do so?” He (PBBUH) said, “Yes.” His believing wife replied, “Then He will not forsake us.”

Before departing from Makkah, Prophet Ibrahim (PBBUH) raised his hands in supplication to Allah (Glorified be He): “Our Lord, I have settled some of my offspring in an uncultivated valley near Your Sacred House, that they may establish prayer. So make hearts among the people incline toward them, and (O Allah) provide them with fruits so that they may give thanks.” (Ibrahim 14:37)

And so, in obedience to Allah’s Command, Ibrahim (PBBUH) left his wife and son in a wasteland and resumed his ceaseless efforts to bring people to Allah (the Majestic and Glorious).

Hajar and Her Baby Left with No Supplies

Two days had passed since Ibrahim’s departure, during which the food and water supplies ran out, and Hajar and her baby started experiencing the pangs of hunger and thirst. As time wore on, her baby’s crying became worse, which left the mother confused as to what she should do, alone, amid this desolate desert.

Anxiously, she started searching for water until she reached Al-Safa Mount. She climbed it only to find nothing. She quickly descended, crossed the valley, and went up another mountain known as Al-Marwa. She looked from the top of it and again found nothing.

She continued running back and forth between the two mountains, repeating the course a total of seven times. Her quest later became an established ritual of Hajj (pilgrimage to Makkah) that commemorates the efforts of Hajar with her son Isma`il (PBBUT).

At one point in her trial, she exerted her utmost to find a human's help, but she could not find a soul. She turned wholeheartedly to Almighty Allah with a sincere supplication to Him for help, and a miracle happened. In a totally barren desert where there was no water, no plants, no life, Isma`il (PBBUH), a mere suckling, struck the ground with his little foot, and a well sprung up and water gushed out abundantly.

Hajar and her son Isma`il (PBBUH) drank their fill, and the water continued flowing in heavy streams. Hajar said to the water, "*Zummi! Zummi!*" (i.e., gather and do not spread). She was asking the water to gather in one spot so as not to drown the earth.

The well of Zamzam was a massive miracle. Powerful drilling machines are now needed to dig a well, with equal chances of finding or not finding water. Yet by the touch of a baby's little foot, water gushed out, providing water for everybody to this day – and, Allah willing, till the end of time. It is a manifestation of Allah's Supreme Power, Who, once He decrees anything, only says to it, "Be!" and it is.

Life Blossoming in the Desert

Where water is, life is. With the springing of Zamzam well, the desert flourished with life. Birds flocked to the well and frequently flew over it. Hovering birds were a sign of water being present, which attracted a group of travelers from the Jurhum tribe to the valley that they previously knew to be lifeless.

When they approached the valley, they found Hajar, her son, and the well. They asked if they could stay with them and use the well, and she allowed them to. Then the rest of the Jurhum tribe came – men, women, and children along with their camels. Another people known as Al-`Amaliq¹ also came to the valley.

¹ Literally the Giants, referring to the first people to inhabit Makkah.

Indeed, Ibrahim's (PBBUH) prayer was answered: "Make hearts among the people incline toward them..." (Ibrahim 14:37) The valley that had been once barren and lifeless became populated with people, pulsating with life.

The hearts of the Jurhum and Al-`Amaliq tribes were drawn to this blessed spot. It became a place that attracts hearts from all over the world, to this day. It will remain so until the Day of Resurrection, by Allah's Will. Zamzam water transformed the barren desert into a verdant land and the fruits multiplied – "...provide them with fruits so that they may give thanks." (Ibrahim 14:37)

Jurhum and Al-`Amaliq Populating the Valley

As was the custom in those days, anyone who found and drilled a well would become its owner. Zamzam well sprang up under the foot of Isma`il (PBBUH) and so Hajar became its owner. The Jurhum and Al-`Amaliq tribes lived with her in this valley and provided protection and service to her and her son, who grew into a strong youth.

Time passed and Prophet Ibrahim (PBBUH) returned to Makkah to find it changed from an arid, barren dessert to a valley filled with life, vitality, and people. He also found his wife and his son Isma`il, who had reached thirteen years of age, brought up by his mother as an upright believer in Allah alone, and a follower of the pure monotheistic religion.

The Building of the Ka`bah

In every place to which he travelled, Ibrahim (PBBUH) used to build a place of worship or an altar. In his travels across Iraq, the Levant, and Egypt, Ibrahim (PBBUH) would often come across places of idol worship, and he always yearned for a place dedicated to the worship of Allah (Exalted be He) alone. Allah fulfilled the yearning of his heart and ordered Ibrahim (PBBUH) to build the Ka`bah (or, according to some scholars, to raise its foundation). Allah designated for him the place where His House was to be built and directed him to start.

“And (mention), when We (Allah) designated for Ibrahim (Abraham) the site of the House, (saying), ‘Do not associate anything with Me and purify My House for those circumambulating it, those standing in prayer, and those bowing and prostrating.’” (Al-Hajj 22:26)

Ibrahim (PBBUH) complied and, with the help of his son Isma`il (PBBUH), began building the Ka`bah. “And (remember) when Ibrahim (Abraham) and (his son) Isma`il (Ishmael) were raising the foundations of the House, (saying), ‘Our Lord, accept (this service) from us. Verily, You are the All-Hearer, the All-Knower.’” (Al-Baqarah 2:127)

Ibrahim and his son Isma`il (PBBUT) were certainly the builders of the Ka`bah. However, according to some records, the building of the Ka`bah was initiated thousands of years before Ibrahim’s (PBBUH) time. Some scholars even traced the construction back to Adam’s time, and believe that Ibrahim and Isma`il (PBBUT) re-established it based on its original foundations.

In any case, Ibrahim and his son (PBBUT) started building Allah’s Sacred House, the Ka`bah. Ibrahim (PBBUH) carried on building, while Isma`il (PBBUH) handed him the stones and supplicated for him. When the building went higher and reached the place of the *Rukn* (the corner of the Black Stone), Ibrahim asked Isma`il to get him a fine stone to place there. Isma`il was a bit late in finding this stone, when Angel Jibril (Gabriel, PBUH) came with the Black Stone.¹ The Black Stone, a stone from Paradise, used to be white but had darkened over time due to people’s sins.

Having returned with a stone and finding the Black Stone set in place, Isma`il (PBBUH) asked, “O father, who brought you this stone?” Ibrahim (PBBUH) replied, “It was brought by one who is brisker than you.” [Tafisr Ibn Kathir vol. 1, p. 178]

¹ The Black Stone is a stone from Paradise that was set into one corner of the *Ka’bah* by Prophet Ibrahim (PBBUH). Muslims honor the Black Stone for that. They follow the example of Prophet Muhammad (PBBUH) when he (PBBUH) kissed it during his Farewell Hajj. Muslims neither attach divine power to nor worship the Black Stone.

Ibrahim's Footprint

As the House's walls rose higher, Ibrahim (PBBUH) needed a rock to stand on to continue with the construction of the Ka`bah. Whenever he finished one side, he would move to the next side, until he had completed the building all the way around. This stepping rock visibly carried his footprints and became known as *Maqam Ibrahim* (the Station of Ibrahim).

In the past, the *Maqam* adjoined the Ka`bah's wall, where Ibrahim (PBBUH) left it after completing the construction. During his reign, `Umar ibn Al-Khattab moved it back to its present position; that is the place where we now offer a two-*Rak`ah* prayer (two-unit prayer) after completing the circumambulation of the Ka`bah.

The Story of the Sacrifice

After Prophet Ibrahim (PBBUH) fulfilled his goal and completed the building of Allah's Sacred House, he and his family were subjected to a great trial of faith that could weigh down a mountain.

In a dream, Ibrahim (PBBUH) saw himself slaughtering his son Isma`il as a sacrifice. Dreams of the prophets, as in wakefulness, were divine instruction from their Lord. They must fulfil them. How would Prophet Ibrahim (PBBUH) act?

Ibrahim (PBBUH) woke up and deliberated over this issue from the morning to the evening. Hence came the name of the Day of *Tarwiyah* (8th of Dhul-Hijjah; literally, the Day of Deliberation). It was also narrated that on the 8th day of Dhul-Hijjah, people used to collect water to use later during the days of Hajj, and hence the name 'Day of *Tarwiyah*.'

That night, Ibrahim (PBBUH) went to sleep and had the same dream. He was reassured that it was from Allah (Glorified be He), and so the 9th day of Dhul-Hijjah became known as the Day of '*Arafah* (literally, the Day of Recognition). When Ibrahim had the same dream for a third night, he woke up

with the certainty that he had to sacrifice his son Isma`il (PBBUT). Thus it was called the Day of *Nabr* (the Day of Sacrifice; it occurs on the 10th day of Dhul-Hijjah).

Ibrahim (PBBUH) Surrendering to Allah's Command and Satan Hindering Him

On the morning of the Day of Sacrifice, Ibrahim (PBBUH) asked Isma`il to bring a rope and a knife and to come with him to collect some firewood.

He and his son set out together. Ibrahim (PBBUH) intended to act on Allah's Command and sacrifice his son. Here, Satan started interfering, as was his usual method. Once a human decides to obey Allah's Orders, he initiates all kinds of excuses and obstacles through which he tries to deceive Allah's servants and lure them away from obedience and compliance to Allah.

Satan, determined to mislead the family of Ibrahim, first targeted Hajar, who as a mother seemed to him to be the weakest, being by nature more sensitive and emotional. He appeared to her in the guise of a man and said to her, "Do you know where Ibrahim is taking your son?" She replied, "He went out with him to collect some firewood from this route." He said, "No, by Allah, he only went out with him to slaughter him." Hajar said, "No, he is too merciful and too loving towards him to do that." He said, "He claims that Allah has ordered him to do so." To this, the righteous wife and mother replied, "If his Lord has ordered him to do so, he has done well to obey his Lord."

Satan did not give up. He went out and caught up with Isma`il (PBBUH) as he was walking behind his father. He had the same conversation he had had with his mother, and he received another blow; the son gave him the same answer as his mother.

At this point, Satan decided to approach the old Sheikh, Ibrahim (PBBUH) himself, and he said to him, "Where do you want to go, O old man?" Ibrahim

replied, “I am going to take this mountain route because I need to do something there.” Satan said, “By Allah, I think Satan came to you in your dream and ordered you to slaughter this son of yours.” Here, Ibrahim recognized him to be Satan and said, “Depart from me, O you enemy of Allah! By Allah, I will proceed with my Lord’s Command.”

Ibrahim (PBBUH) moved on, but Satan caught up with him at a spot called the Large *Jamrah* (the largest pelting area). Here, Ibrahim threw seven pebbles at him until he disappeared. Satan again pursued him at a spot called the Middle *Jamrah* (second or middle pelting area) and Ibrahim stoned him with another seven pebbles until he disappeared. Again, he reappeared to him at a spot called the Small *Jamrah* and Ibrahim again stoned him with seven pebbles until he disappeared without return, clearly realizing that he would have no influence over Ibrahim (PBBUH) and his family.¹

Ibrahim (PBBUH) Proceeding to Sacrifice His Son

Before carrying out Allah’s Command, Ibrahim (PBBUH) decided that he should inform Isma`il (PBBUH) of what he intended to do. The Qur’an quotes that he said: “O my son! I have seen in a dream that I am slaughtering you (offering you in sacrifice to Allah), so see what you think!” (Al-Saffat 37:102)

Isma`il (PBBUH) knew without a doubt that the dreams of the Prophets were divine revelation and that he was facing a Decree from Almighty Allah. He replied without hesitation: “O my father, do as you are commanded. You will find me, Allah willing, of the patient ones.” (Al-Saffat 37:102)

¹ As a re-enactment of Prophet Ibrahim’s (PBBUH) firm stand against the temptation of Satan, Muslim pilgrims perform the ritual of stoning Satan at the three pebble-throwing areas (the Large, Middle, and Small *Jamrahs*) as a reminder of how Ibrahim resisted Satan.

In a spirit of patience and acceptance, Isma`il (PBBUH) encouraged his father to go ahead with the sacrifice, saying:

- (O father) Do not slaughter me while looking me in the face lest you feel compassion for me and fail to put me to death. But tie my hands to my neck, then place my face upon the ground.
- Draw your clothes back from me lest they be spattered with my blood and it gives grief to my mother when she sees it.
- Pull the knife quickly across my neck to make death easier for me. And when you return to my mother, convey to her my greetings of peace.¹

It was as though Isma`il (PBBUH) craved from Allah (Exalted be He) a full reward for his father.

Then, at the critical moment when Ibrahim (PBBUH) laid his son facedown with his knife ready on the nape of his neck, Allah (Glorified be He) intervened once again – like the time when He ordered the fire not to burn Ibrahim (PBBUH) and be cool and safe for him. Here, Allah intervened and ordered the knife not to cut or hurt Isma`il (PBBUH). Allah (Exalted be He) then sent an angel calling out to Ibrahim: “O Ibrahim, you have fulfilled the vision,” and on raising his head, Ibrahim saw a large ram descending towards him. He (PBBUH) slaughtered it as a sacrifice instead of Isma`il.

Allah (Exalted be He) succinctly depicts this momentous event in His Book: “Then, when they had both submitted themselves (to Allah’s Will), and he had laid him prostrate on his forehead, We (Allah) called out to him, ‘O Ibrahim! You have fulfilled the vision.’ Indeed, We thus reward the doers of good. Verily, that indeed was a manifest trial. And We ransomed him with a great sacrifice.” (Al-Saffat 37:103-107)

¹ Tafsir Al-Tabari and Tafsir Al-Qurtubi.

The Return of Ibrahim and His Son (PBUS)

Ibrahim (PBUS) returned home with his son to his mother, overflowing with deep joy at Allah's Grace and Mercy to them. Their joy at their submission to Allah's Order and successfully passing this difficult test was even greater than their joy at the redemption of Isma`il by a ram.

The Call to Pilgrimage

Ibrahim (PBUS) emerged from this trial steadfast and safe with a renewed focus on his original task – his mission of calling people to Allah (Exalted be He). He had built the Ka`bah as Allah had ordered, and Allah saved his son and provided a ram in his place, and so he supplicated to Almighty Allah:

“Our Lord, and make us submissive to You and of our offspring a nation submissive to You, and show us our rites (all the ceremonies of pilgrimage), and accept our repentance. Truly, You are the One Who accepts repentance, the Most Merciful.” (Al-Baqarah 2:128)

Ibrahim supplicated to Allah (Glorified be He) to teach him how to worship Him and draw closer to Him. Allah (the Most High) taught him all the rites of pilgrimage to Makkah, known as Hajj, starting from *Tawaf* (circumambulation of the Ka`bah), *Sa`y* (going between Safa and Marwah during Hajj and `Umrah), and *Ramy* (stoning of the devil) till the end. All rituals were intended to evoke remembrance of the previously mentioned uplifting and edifying events, and to draw important lessons and wisdom from them.

After Allah (the Most Exalted) showed Ibrahim (PBUS) the order in which the rites should be performed, He ordered him to call people to come to Hajj. The Noble Qur'an says: “And proclaim to humankind the Hajj (pilgrimage to Makkah), and they shall come to you on foot and upon every lean camel, they shall come from every distant pass.” (Al-Hajj 22:27)

Prophet Ibrahim (PBBUH) wondered how his voice would reach across the whole earth, especially in a time that lacked all modern means of communication. Allah's Response was: "Your role is to make the call, and Ours is to convey it."

The evident lesson here is that a human's role in this life is to work hard, persevere, and employ the available means, and then leave the outcomes to Allah (Exalted be He), keeping in mind Allah's Words to his *Khalil* (beloved, close elect servant), Prophet Ibrahim (PBBUH). Our duty ends at doing the work correctly, and Allah, according to His Will, translates it into results and success.

Ibrahim (PBBUH) complied and proclaimed the pilgrimage to all humankind as Allah (Glorified be He) commanded him. All people of the earth heard him. They started coming from all corners of the world to the Ka`bah to perform the pilgrimage by all means of transport and will continue to come until Judgement Day, in response to Ibrahim's call, while repeating, "*Labbayka Allahumma labbayk, labbayka la sharika laka labbayk. Inna al-hamda wan-ni`mata laka wal-mulk, la sharika lak* (Here I am, O Allah, here I am. Here I am, You have no partner. Here I am. Verily, all praise and blessings are Yours, and all sovereignty, You have no partner)."

"I Am the Answer to Ibrahim's (PBBUH) Supplication"

Ibrahim's (PBBUH) wish became reality; he saw the fulfilment of Allah's Command. It was time for Ibrahim to return to Hebron after Allah clarified to him the sequence of the Hajj rituals to follow and pass on to his descendants. Before his departure, he made one last supplication, asking Allah (the Most High) to send a Messenger from Isma`il's offspring. He (PBBUH) said, as the Qur'an relates:

"Our Lord, and send among them a Messenger from themselves who will recite to them Your Ayat and teach them the Book and wisdom and purify them. Indeed, You are the Exalted in Might, the Wise." (Al-Baqarah 2:129)

Prophet Muhammad (PBBUH) was reported to have said: **“I will inform you of my beginning. I am the answer to Ibrahim’s (PBBUH) supplication, and the prophecy of `Isa (Jesus, PBBUH), and the vision that my mother saw when she delivered me, as a bright light came out of her, illuminating the palaces of Syria.”**¹

Ibrahim’s (PBBUH) mission in Makkah was thus completed. He offered *Tawaf-ul-Wada`* (the farewell circumambulation of the Ka`bah on leaving Makkah) and returned to Hebron.

¹ Al-Mustadrak ala Al-Sahihain.

Isma`il (PBBUH)

Three years had passed since Prophet Ibrahim (PBBUH) had left Makkah. Isma`il (PBBUH) was by then eighteen years of age and married to a young woman from the Jurhum tribe named `Umarah bint Sa`d. She used to grumble often about their poverty and austere living conditions.

Ibrahim (PBBUH) Advises His Son

Whenever Ibrahim (PBBUH) felt yearnings for the Sacred Mosque, he would travel to Makkah and head to Hajar's house. Upon learning of Isma`il's marriage, he went to visit him at his home; not finding him there, he asked his wife about their living conditions. Despite not knowing who he was, she complained to Ibrahim about how poor and hard their life was. Ibrahim (PBBUH) asked her to convey to Isma`il his greetings of peace and tell him that he should change the threshold of his door. When Isma`il (PBBUH) returned home, his wife told him about the old man who came visiting and the message he left for him. Isma`il instantly realized that the man was his father advising him to leave this lady, to which Isma`il complied and he divorced her.

Time passed and Isma`il (PBBUH) remarried to a woman named Sayyidah bint Mudad. After two years, Ibrahim (PBBUH) yearned anew for Allah's House and his son Isma`il. He called on Isma`il, but once again he was not at home, so he asked his wife how their life was. She replied, "We are prosperous and well off," and gave thanks to Allah. After hearing this, Ibrahim (PBBUH) asked her to send his greetings of peace to Isma`il and request him to "Keep firm the threshold of his door." When Isma`il (PBBUH) came back and heard the message, he said to her, "That was my father, and you are the threshold that he ordered me to hold on to."

This was Allah's Will for this grateful wife: to bear the offspring of Prophet Isma`il (PBBUH), among whom would be the future and Final Prophet and the best man in creation, Muhammad (PBBUH).

Isma`il (PBBUH) Becomes a Prophet

Days passed on, and Isma`il received the glad tidings of prophethood. He was entrusted to carry on his father's legacy of calling people to the One and Only True God. The Noble Qur'an relates it as such: "And mention in the Book Isma`il (Ishmael). Verily! He was true to his promise, and he was a Messenger and a Prophet. He used to enjoin on his family and people prayer and charity, and his Lord was pleased with him." (Maryam 19:54-55)

Isma`il's (PBBUH) Offspring

Isma`il (PBBUH) was blessed with twelve sons from his wife Sayyidah bint Mudad. Nabit (Nebaioth) was the firstborn of Isma`il, and Qaydar (Kedar) was the second born. They spread across the Arabian Peninsula, except for Qaydar, whose offspring remained in Makkah. They multiplied into tribes, and from them descended `Adnan and his son Ma`d, the ancestors of the Adnanite Arabs. `Adnan was the twenty-first grandfather in the honorable ancestral line of Prophet Muhammad (PBBUH).

The Conditions of the Arabian Peninsula

The Religious Condition

Most Arabs followed Ibrahim's (PBBUH) monotheistic religion for many years, from the time Ibrahim's offspring originated and spread across the Arabian Peninsula. Then a drastic shift occurred with the emergence of the chief of the Khuza`ah tribe, `Amr bin Luhay. On one of his travels to the Levant, `Amr saw the people there using idols as a means of worshiping and drawing closer to Allah (the Exalted and Majestic). He was so pleased with their practice that he bought an idol named Hubal and took it back with him to Makkah. It became the first idol to be worshipped along with Almighty Allah in pre-Islamic Arabia. It was made of red agate, and was in the form of a human being, with the right hand broken off and replaced with a golden hand.

Shirk and idolatrous beliefs were thus introduced to Makkah and spread unchecked throughout the Arabian Peninsula until every tribe had its own idol. Al-Lat belonged to the Thaqlif tribe at Al-Ta'if; Manat belonged to Hudhail and Khuza`ah, and Al-`Uzza belonged to Quraysh and Banu Kinanah.

`Amr bin Luhay did not stop at that. He started reviving the ancient idols worshipped at the time of Prophet Nuh (Noah, PBBUH), namely, Wadd, Suwa`, Yaghuth, Ya`uq, and Nasr. He extracted them from where they were buried in the town of Jeddah and brought them to Allah's Sacred House – the Ka`bah.

In this way, idol worship became rampant across the entire Arabian Peninsula to the extent that each home possessed its own idol. The sanctuary of the Ka`bah itself was surrounded by some three hundred and sixty idols, which Prophet Muhammad (PBBUH) smashed to pieces with a stroke of his stick on the Day of *Fath* (Liberation of Makkah).

`Amr bin Luhay Drags His Intestines in Hellfire

One little deviation is capable of triggering endless deviations from the right path, as occurred at the hands of `Amr bin Luhay when he brought the idols to Makkah, thinking they would bring people closer to Allah (the Most Exalted). Instead, beliefs shifted, and people worshipped stones and statues instead of the True God.

In this regard, Prophet Muhammad (PBBUH) said: **“I saw `Amr bin `Amir bin Luhay Al-Khuza`i dragging his intestines in the Hellfire.”** (Narrated by Al-Bukhari.) Not only would `Amr bin Luhay carry his own burden of sin, but he would also carry the burden of every person who followed his path until the Day of Judgement.

The Political Condition

The Yemeni tribe of Jurhum held rulership over Makkah for about twenty-one centuries. Then the steady decline of Jurhum allowed the Qahatani tribe of Khuza`ah to gradually take over. It was well known to everyone that taking the reins of power in Makkah and the custodianship of the Ka`bah gave one supremacy on the Arabian Peninsula.

After the ascendancy of the new ruling tribe of Khuza`ah and its taking full control over Makkah, the time came for the Jurhum tribe to hand over power. Before leaving, the Jurhumites, under the command of their last ruler, `Amr bin Mudad Al-Jurhumi, carried out a scorched-earth policy by sealing Zamzam well and obliterating all signs of it. They buried two golden gazelles in the well along with other treasures, in the hope that they would be returned to them someday. Left with no other alternative, the Khuza`ah tribe was hence forced to fetch water from outside Makkah and that caused them much hardship.

Khuza`ah’s reign in Makkah and guardianship over the Ka`bah and its pilgrims lasted for almost three hundred years, until the appearance of Qusai bin

Kalab, the fifth grandfather of Messenger Muhammad (PBBUH). Qusai was a descendant of Banu `Adnan, whose bloodlines linked back to Qaydar, son of Isma`il (PBBUH). He brought the situation back to its original track in Makkah and regained the lost positions, privileges, and sovereignty for his people and for the Quraysh after him.

Qusai ibn Kilab

Following a battle with the Khuza`ah in which Qusai was victorious, Makkah returned to Banu `Adnan, the descendants of Qaydar, son of Isma`il (PBBUH). Qusai thus became the leader of Makkah and assumed responsibility for Allah's Ancient House (the Sacred Ka`bah).

Achievements and Key Aspects of Qusai's Leadership

1. **Establishment of *Dar Al-Nadwa* (Council House):** This was a meeting place, similar to a present-day parliament, where the chiefs of the Quraysh assembled and discussed their important issues.
2. **Establishment of a brigade:** This was similar to a present-day ministry of defense. It was under the personal command of Qusai, assisted by his sons, and had the task of assigning leaders, announcing wars, and protecting pilgrims.
3. **Establishment of the duty of *Hijabah* (also called *Sidanah*; custodianship of the Ka`bah):** The duty of cleaning, maintaining, door-keeping, and safeguarding the keys of the Ka`bah. Qusai had the custodial duty of looking after the Ka`bah and was the only person eligible to hold its keys. He was the first to build a roof for the Ka`bah.
4. **Establishment of the duty of *Siqayah* (provision of water for the pilgrims):** Qusai and his sons were responsible for supplying pilgrims with fresh water by placing water-filled leather containers in the courtyard of the Ka`bah.
5. **Establishment of the duty of *Rifadah* (provision of food for the pilgrims):** The duty of feeding the pilgrims and the visitors of the Sacred House.

Qusai imposed a special levy on the wealthy members of the Quraysh to help provide for the needs of the pilgrims.

The Sons of Qusai

These roles and positions were under the authority of Qusai during his lifetime, which, upon his death, were transferred by his will to his eldest son, `Abd Al-Dar. All the responsibility devolved to him despite the high reputation and leadership skills with which `Abd Manaf, the third grandfather of Prophet Muhammad (PBBUH), had been credited. `Abd Manaf had four sons: Hashim (the second grandfather of the Prophet PBBUH), Al-Muttalib, `Abd Shams, and Nawfal.

This status quo continued until the death of both `Abd Al-Dar and `Abd Manaf, at which time the empty positions were fought out between their descendants. The tribe of `Abd Manaf regarded themselves as more deserving of the leadership of Makkah. A ruinous war was about to erupt. It could have devastated everything in its path and annihilated the Quraysh. Eventually, they favored peace and conciliation. They agreed to divide the roles and responsibilities between them.

By the terms of their agreement, the provision of water and food for the pilgrims became the responsibility of the sons of `Abd Manaf. The custodianship of the Ka`bah, the council house, and the army were the responsibility of the sons of `Abd Al-Dar. This agreement lasted several years until Islam arrived in Makkah.

Hashim

Of all the sons of `Abd Manaf, Hashim was the most dignified and respected, with the strongest leadership skills. He was a wealthy man and had the privilege of handling the services of *Siqayah* and *Rifadah* (providing water and food for the pilgrims who came to Makkah).

Achievements and Key Aspects of Hashim's Leadership

1. **Hospitality:** Hashim was known for his exceptional hospitality and generosity of spirit, not only to the visitors of the Sacred House during the pilgrimage season, but generally to all the people of Makkah. He used to provide them with a bread and meat broth known as *Tharid*. His real name was `Amr, but because he initiated the hospitable act of offering pilgrims a meal of bread crumbs soaked in meat broth, he received the appellation of Hashim (literally, the breaker of bread) for breaking the bread into crumbs, in ample amounts, to prepare *Tharid* meal and serve it to the people.
2. **Commercial achievement:** Hashim was the first to institute the two trading journeys of the Quraysh, a winter trip to Yemen and a summer trip to the Levant.
3. **Political achievement:** During his reign, several peace agreements were concluded, including treaties with the Roman Empire, the Negus (the King of Abyssinia), and the Himyarites in Yemen. This allowed the Quraysh to trade and travel safely and securely in these territories.
4. **Status of Makkah:** Makkah flourished during the reign of Hisham. Through his wisdom and far-sighted vision, Makkah was strengthened and its status elevated to being the recognized capital city and political center of the Arabian Peninsula.

Umayyah Contesting Hashim's Rule

Hashim remained the uncontested ruler of Makkah. No one even remotely thought of challenging his authority until his paternal nephew, Umayyah ibn `Abd Shams (Umayyah Al-Akbar), believed himself to be powerful enough to contest him. Yet Umayyah failed in his attempt and was sentenced to a ten-year exile in Syria. The effects of this incident would be long-lasting, reaching into the life of Prophet Muhammad (PBBUH). The one conceivable explanation behind the unjustifiable enmity and rancor that the sons of Umayyah had towards the Prophet (PBBUH) is that he was a descendent of Banu Hashim.

Hashim's Marriage

On his return from a trading trip from the Levant, Hashim stopped in Yathrib (now Madinah), where he married a woman by the name of Salma bint `Amr, from the Najjar clan of the Khazraj tribe. She won his admiration, but she continued to live in Yathrib while Hashim travelled back and forth to her. She bore him a son whom she named Shaybah (white hair) because he had a lock of white hair at birth.

Hashim died during one of his trips and was buried in Gaza.

Al-Muttalib

After the death of Hashim, his brother Al-Muttalib took over the affairs of Makkah and the Ka`bah. Despite being younger than his brother `Abd Shams, Al-Muttalib garnered more respect and merit in the eyes of the Quraysh. He was known among them as Al-Faid¹ for his generosity and magnanimity.

Al-Muttalib was not blessed with any children. As he grew older, he started to think of Shaybah, the son of his brother Hashim. He went to Yathrib and

¹ Abundance of giving, grace, favor, bounty.

asked his mother Salma if he could take him back to the Sanctuary of Makkah, to one day fill his father's position of leadership.

Salma allowed Shaybah to depart with his uncle, and the two headed to Makkah with Shaybah riding behind his uncle on his camel. On entering Makkah, people mistook him for a new slave of Al-Muttalib, and shouted, “`Abdul-Muttalib!” (Literally, Al-Muttalib's slave). Al-Muttalib explained to them that the youth was his nephew Shaybah who had returned with him from Yathrib. However, his title “`Abdul-Muttalib” remained, and his original name was forgotten.

`Abdul-Muttalib

Little did `Abdul-Muttalib imagine that by coming to Makkah with his uncle he would become the grandfather of the best of Allah's creation, and receive the everlasting honor that this status would bestow on him.

Before his death, Al-Muttalib bequeathed the leadership of Makkah to his paternal nephew `Abdul-Muttalib (originally Shaybah), a matter which did not please his paternal uncle Nawfal. So, he attempted to overthrow him and seize power in Makkah. `Abdul-Muttalib sought the support of his maternal uncles from the clan of Najjar. They backed him with eighty horsemen who helped him solidify his rule in Makkah. He retained his leadership position along with the honorable responsibility of feeding and providing water for the pilgrims.

Achievements and Key Aspects of `Abdul-Muttalib

`Abdul-Muttalib's most outstanding achievements were the re-excavation and restoration of Zamzam well and the crucial part he played in the '**Elephant Incident**.'

1- The Re-excavation of Zamzam well

`Abdul-Muttalib assumed his role of feeding and providing water for the pilgrims. He also continued the legacy of his grandfather, Qusai, in levying contributions from the wealthy people of Makkah to feed the visitors of Allah's House – the Ka`bah.

Providing water for the pilgrims posed a significantly larger challenge for `Abdul-Muttalib because of the scarcity of rain. To address it, he built large cisterns in the courtyard of the Ka`bah to which he transported fresh water from the wells outside Makkah. Providing the required amounts of water through this process put hardship and pressure on `Abdul-Muttalib, especially with the yearly

increase in the number of pilgrims. It constantly occupied his mind as a pressing priority that demanded a solution for the next Hajj (pilgrimage) season.

Glad Tidings for `Abdul-Muttalib

With his mind engrossed in his concerns about the task before him, one day `Abdul-Muttalib slept and heard a voice in his dream saying to him, “Dig *Taibah*¹.” `Abdul-Muttalib replied, “What is *Taibah*?” Then he awoke.

The next night, the same voice came to him and said, “Dig *Barrah*²”, without explaining what it was.

On the third night, the same voice came to him and said “Dig Zamzam.” `Abdul-Muttalib asked what Zamzam was. This time the voice replied, “It is a well that never depletes, nor does its water lessen. It provides water for the great multitudes of pilgrims.”

The voice told `Abdul-Muttalib the location of the well, and stated that, as a sign, there would be a crow picking at the ground. The people of Makkah often heard the oral traditions about their great grandfather `Ismai`l (PBBUH) and the springing forth of Zamzam well, but no one knew exactly where the well was situated.

In the morning, `Abdul-Muttalib woke up and went with Al-Harith, his only son at the time, to the described location of the well. As depicted, they saw a crow picking at the ground, signifying that this was indeed the place. Incidentally, the crow was present between Isaf and Na`ilah, two idols worshipped at the time.

The digging started and continued until their axes hit the rocks under which the well was concealed.

¹ Derives from the word *Tayyib*, which means something good, pleasant, pure.

² Derives from the word *Birr*, which means virtue and benevolence.

The Quraysh Objecting

Driven by envy of the honor that this well would confer on `Abdul-Muttalib, the chiefs and dignitaries of Makkah did not want the digging to continue, so they placed several obstacles and pretexts to thwart the attempt, such as claiming that the digging work would harm their two most important idols, Isaf and Na'ilah.

Envy that hampers beneficial initiatives is a persistent phenomenon. Once a person undertakes a welfare project, no matter how big or small, to improve some aspect of human life, it is opposed by people with secret motives who work with all their energy to stop this good work, out of spite and jealousy. Their reasons may outwardly appear plausible, but inwardly are bitter and malicious. May Allah (the Compassionate and Merciful) cure our hearts and minds of this disease.

A Miracle Supporting `Abdul-Muttalib

When the conflict intensified between the Quraysh and `Abdul-Muttalib, they agreed to solicit an independent judgement from a female soothsayer living in Al-Sham (Greater Syria or the Levant). They set off on their long journey, but soon ran out of water and faced almost certain death. They stayed where they were to deliberate a solution, until they decided to proceed with their journey in the hope of finding water on the way.

Each of them rode his mount and moved on. As `Abdul-Muttalib was getting on his camel, water started gushing out from under his camel's hoofs. His companions quickly gathered around him, exalting Allah and drinking water to their hearts' content.

They said to `Abdul-Muttalib, "By Allah, the matter has been decided in your favor against us. We shall never dispute with you over Zamzam. The One (Allah) Who has provided you with water in that desert is the same One Who has

provided you with Zamzam. So, return rightly guided to your spring of water.” They went back to Makkah without consulting the soothsayer and allowed `Abdul-Muttalib to continue digging Zamzam.

As `Abdul-Muttalib dug deeper into the well, he found the treasure that had been buried by the Jurhum tribe when they departed Makkah, and Khuza`ah took power in their place. The treasure consisted of the two golden gazelle statues, some swords, and armor.

The Quraysh became excited at the sight of the treasure and quarreled over how it should be distributed. They decided to cast lots. The two golden gazelles fell to the share of the Ka`bah and `Abdul-Muttalib got the swords and armor. Nothing fell to the share of the Quraysh.

`Abdul-Muttalib had the swords and armor forged into a door for the Ka`bah, and overlaid the door with the gold melted from the two gazelle statues. This was the first golden ornament of the Ka`bah. `Abdul-Muttalib also made a great water cistern around Zamzam to supply water for the pilgrims and all the people of Makkah.

The Vow of `Abdul-Muttalib

The events that occurred in Makkah had a lasting effect on `Abdul-Muttalib and made him feel keenly his lack of sons. If he had had sufficient children, they would have protected him. He would have been able to dig the well unhindered and without facing objections. So, he made a vow to Allah that, if He bestowed on him ten sons who grew up to be a strength and support to him, he would sacrifice one of them as an offering to Allah.

Years passed, and one son after another was born to `Abdul-Muttalib, until Allah had blessed him with ten sons. `Abdul-Muttalib then gathered his sons, told them about his vow, and asked them to help him fulfil it. They decided to choose which son should be sacrificed by casting lots with arrows. Each arrow

was inscribed with the name of one of the ten sons. The arrows were cast, and the arrow of `Abdullah, his youngest and most beloved son, came out.

The Ransoming of `Abdullah

The Quraysh met the news of `Abdul-Muttalib's intention to sacrifice `Abdullah with strong opposition, especially since `Abdullah was a handsome, peaceful youth, beloved by the people. Some Qurayshi men even offered one of their own sons to be sacrificed instead of `Abdullah, but `Abdul-Muttalib refused. They then advised `Abdul-Muttalib to seek a way out of this impasse by consulting a renowned divineress in Hejaz (a region in the west of present-day Saudi Arabia).

They went to her and explained the situation. She asked them, "How much is the blood money prescribed by your people?" They replied, "Ten camels." She said, "Return to your country and bring your companion (`Abdullah) and ten camels and cast the arrows. If the arrows fall on your companion, add more camels until your Lord is satisfied. If the arrows fall on the camels, sacrifice them in his place, because it is then that your Lord will be satisfied with the camels instead of him."

They returned to Makkah and did as she advised. They drew the arrows, which fell on `Abdullah. They rose the number of camels to twenty. Once again, the lot fell on `Abdullah. They repeated this several times, each time adding ten camels and drawing the arrows, and each time they fell on `Abdullah. When the camels numbered one hundred, the arrows were drawn and the lot fell on the camels.

They slaughtered the hundred camels, and `Abdullah's life was saved by the sacrifice, as his great grandfather Isma`il (Ishmael PBBUH) was saved by the sacrifice of a great ram. For this reason, Prophet Muhammad (PBBUH) said, "**I am the son of the two men who were offered in sacrifice,**" meaning his great ancestor Isma`il (PBBUH) and his own father `Abdullah.

ʿAbdullah's Marriage

ʿAbdul-Muttalib and the whole of the Quraysh rejoiced in the deliverance of their clansman ʿAbdullah. Soon after this incident, ʿAbdullah married Aminah bint Wahb ibn ʿAbd Manaf ibn Zuhrah. She was a woman born of the best bloodlines and highest social status in the Quraysh. Her father was the chief of Banu Zuhrah.

As was the custom of the Arabs at that time, after the marriage ceremony ʿAbdullah stayed with Aminah in her family's house for three days. He then moved to the dwelling of ʿAbdul-Muttalib's family. He stayed there no longer than a month before he set out on a trade journey to Al-Sham (Greater Syria or the Levant) and left Aminah pregnant with his son, who would become the best human being to ever walk this earth, Al-Mustafa (the Beloved Chosen One of Allah).

ʿAbdullah's Illness and Death

On his way back from his trip, ʿAbdullah fell extremely ill and decided to stop over at the dwelling place of his maternal uncles in Yathrib, Banu ʿAdi ibn Al-Najjar. He stayed with them for a month, while his travel companions proceeded back to Makkah. Upon their arrival, they informed ʿAbdul-Muttalib of ʿAbdullah's illness. ʿAbdul-Muttalib immediately dispatched his eldest son, Al-Harith, to his aid, but he found that ʿAbdullah had already died and been buried, aged twenty-five.

Al-Harith returned to Makkah with the painful news, which spread like wildfire, and brought deep grief to his father, ʿAbdul-Muttalib, and his brothers. Upon hearing of her husband's death, Aminah burst into tears, weeping for herself and her baby, who became fatherless before he was even born.

Aminah had not the slightest notion that the fetus moving inside her womb would be a mercy bestowed upon the world and the Last of Allah's Prophets and

Messengers. Thus, Allah (the Most Exalted) decreed that our honorable Messenger Muhammad (PBBUH) should be born fatherless.

This was the story of the digging of Zamzam well, the subsequent vow, and the commitment of `Abdul-Muttalib to fulfilling it. The second most prominent incident in his history was the Elephant Incident.

The Elephant Incident

Abraha was the Ethiopian governor of Yemen during the time Yemen was ruled by the Ethiopian kingdom, following the expulsion of the Persian governor. Abraha constructed a colossal cathedral in Yemen (called Al-Qullays) with the intention of diverting the pilgrimage of the Arabs from the Ka`bah in Makkah to his own temple in Sanaa. Only the Ka`bah has been blessed and honored by Allah as His Sacred House of worship. It occupies an irreplaceable position in people's hearts and souls in fulfillment of Prophet Ibrahim's supplication. And so Abraha's plan to attract the Arab pilgrims away from Makkah to his church was a complete failure.

Attempting to Destroy the Ka`bah

Abraha decided to destroy the rival to his church (the Ka`bah) so that people would have no other alternative than to pay pilgrimage to his newly built cathedral. He marched against Makkah with an army of sixty thousand men, all ready for combat, spearheaded by a mighty elephant, and many other war-trained elephants. Abraha and his huge forces continued the advance, attacking and destroying everything on their way to the Ka`bah and meeting very little resistance from the people. Terror, horror, and flight were the sole reactions he encountered.

When Abraha reached Ta'if¹, he planned to destroy the temple of Al-Lat goddess, mistaking it for the Ka`bah. The temple of Al-Lat in the city of Ta'if was as sacred to the people of Ta'if as the Ka`bah was to the rest of the Arabs. Therefore, to protect their own temple of Al-Lat from destruction, they sent a man called Abu Raghmal to lead Abraha to Makkah and the Ka`bah, which maintained its unique eminent position in the hearts of the Arabs and joined them together, even if they worshipped different deities.

Near the outskirts of Makkah, Abraha and his army seized the herds of cattle belonging to the people of Makkah, including the camels owned by `Abdul-Muttalib, the chief leader of the Quraysh at that time. The Quraysh and neighboring tribes banded together to defend the Sanctuary, but their efforts were hampered by the massive imbalance of forces. They realized they lacked the power to resist Abraha and his army.

“The House Has a Lord Who Protects It”

Abraha arrived at Makkah and dispatched his envoy to the chief of Makkah, bearing the message: “I have not come to fight, but only to destroy this House (i.e., the Ka`bah).” Abraha also requested through his envoy a meeting with the chief of Makkah, provided he had no intention of fighting back.

`Abdul-Muttalib, on receiving the message, replied to the envoy with these words: “By Allah, we do not want to fight him, nor do we have the ability to do so. This is Allah’s Sacred House, and the House of His *Khalil* (beloved, close elect), Ibrahim. If He defends it, it is His House and His Sanctuary. And if He lets him approach it, by Allah, we have no means to defend it from him.”

`Abdul-Muttalib then went with the envoy to meet Abraha. `Abdul-Muttalib was a most impressive, handsome, and dignified man. When Abraha saw him, he held him in such high regard that he descended from his throne, sat

¹ A Saudi city in the Makkah province of Saudi Arabia.

down on a carpet on the ground, and asked `Abdul-Muttalib to sit beside him. Then the following historical conversation took place between them through an interpreter:

Abraha said, "What do you want?"

`Abdul-Muttalib said, "I want you to return my two hundred camels which you have taken from me."

Abraha, extremely surprised, said, "You pleased me when I first saw you, but now that you have spoken to me, I have ceased to admire you. You speak to me only of your two hundred camels which I have taken, and say nothing about a House that is (the foundation of) your religion and the religion of your forefathers, which I have come to destroy?"

`Abdul-Muttalib, in full confidence, replied, "I am the owner of the camels; the House (Ka`bah) has its Owner Who will defend it."

Abraha said, "He cannot defend it from me."

`Abdul-Muttalib said, "This is a matter between you and Him!"

The conversation ended thus, and Abraha gave the plundered camels back to `Abdul-Muttalib. `Abdul-Muttalib then returned to Makkah and informed the Quraysh of what had happened. He advised them to vacate Makkah and take shelter in caves in the mountains.

Makkah quickly became empty and only `Abdul-Muttalib remained. He stood alone in front of the Ka`bah's doors, his hands holding tightly onto their handles, and he began supplicating fervently that Allah might keep His House, the Ka`bah, in the stronghold of His Protection. His entreaties were addressed solely to Allah Who responds to the distressed when they cry to Him and relieves their affliction.

The Confrontation Between Allah's Army and Abraha's Army

As morning approached, Abraha prepared to enter Makkah, and the battle started between Abraha's large army and Allah's Own Soldiers. Abraha gave orders to the elephants to advance and destroy the Ka`bah. Allah, their Creator, ordered them to freeze where they were, and they obeyed their Creator. They stood completely still.

The elephants were repeatedly whipped, and still they refused to move. They became more and more immobile and transfixed to the ground. Abraha was shocked. What increased his astonishment was that when they turned in any direction other than that of the Ka`bah (Yemen, Syria, or eastward), the elephants started off at a runaway pace.

Then Allah the Almighty commanded His Air Force, birds in large flocks, to attack the arrogant Abraha and his unconquerable army. Swarms of flying birds filled the air, each carrying three stones, one in its beak and one in each of its claws. Each stone, though as small as a chickpea or a lentil, was as destructive as an atomic bomb. The flocks came upon them in successive groups from various directions and cast down upon them the stones in their beaks and claws. It was as if a window had been opened in hell, and the birds were pelting stones of hard clay at the army. Every stone that was pelted unmistakably hit and burned one of Abraha's soldiers. In vain did Abraha and his army attempt to retreat. The burns were so severe that as they ran away, their flesh was dropping off their bodies. Abraha died, and his army was defeated.

Allah (Exalted be He) recounts this incident in His Glorious Book when He says: "Have you not seen how your Lord dealt with the Owners of the Elephant? Did He not make their plot go astray? And sent against them birds, in flocks. Striking them with stones of baked clay, leaving them like chewed up straw." (Al-Fil 105:1-5)

Victory against Abraha and his army through divine intervention elevated the status of Allah's Sacred House and increased the reverence with which it was regarded. From that date on, the Arabs marked the Year of the Elephant as the start of their calendar.

This divine miracle laid the groundwork, preparing the earth for the most significant event in its entire history: the birth of the best of Allah's creation, the Beloved Chosen Prophet, Muhammad (PBBUH). He was born fifty days after the occurrence of the Elephant Incident.

The Prophet's (PBBUH) Birth

The days passed and the pregnancy of Aminah with the Prophet (PBBUH) went by easily, without discomfort or difficulties. Describing her pregnancy with the Prophet (PBBUH), it was narrated that Aminah bint Wahb said, “It caused me no hardship.” Up until the time of delivery, she did not experience any of the labor pains or symptoms that pregnant women usually have.

The Prophet (PBBUH) was born on Monday the 12th of Rabi` Al-Awwal in the Year of the Elephant (570 CE), according to the majority opinion of scholars and historians. However, a few alternative opinions exist with regard to his exact date of birth.

His birth was the most glorious incident in the history of humanity, and since it carries such exceptional importance, there were some powerful signs and blessings given before his birth:

- In a vision, his mother saw a light emerging from her that illuminated the palaces of the Levant. When she had delivered him, she said, “A light came out of me that illuminated all that was between the east and the west.”
- It was narrated that concurrent with the Prophet's birth (PBBUH), fourteen balconies of the palace of the Persian King, Kisra (Khosrow), collapsed. The fire worshipped by the Magians, which had burned continually for a thousand years, extinguished itself. The water of Sawah lake, which people treated as holy, sank into the earth.
- The midwife who assisted at his delivery, Al-Shifa' bint `Auf (Umm `Abdul-Rahman), recounted that when the newborn Prophet (PBBUH) was delivered into her hands, she heard a voice saying, “May Allah have mercy on you.”

- Regarding this event, Hassan ibn Thabit (RA) also related, “I was a little boy of seven, able to comprehend well what I saw and heard, when one day I heard a Jewish man from Yathrib screaming, “O Jewish people!” And after they had assembled, he said, “Tonight, the star of Ahmad (another name for the Prophet, PBBUH), which proclaims his birth, has risen.”

Abdul-Muttalib’s Joy Upon Hearing About the Newborn

‘Abdul-Muttalib rejoiced in the news of his grandson’s (PBBUH) birth. He went to Aminah, who told him about the light she had seen during the birth. At hearing this, he exclaimed, “This son of mine will be of great importance,” and he named him Muhammad [from the root H-M-D, meaning ‘praise’]. It was an unfamiliar name to the Arabs at the time. When ‘Abdul-Muttalib was asked about the reason behind naming him so, he said, “To be praised by Allah in the heavens and by people on the earth.”

The Prophet's (PBBUH) Childhood

The Wet Nurses and Carers of the Prophet (PBBUH)

Thuwaybah had the honor of breastfeeding the Prophet (PBBUH) after his mother, Aminah. Thuwaybah was a female slave owned by Abu Lahab ibn `Abdul-Muttalib (the Prophet's uncle). She used to breastfeed the Prophet (PBBUH) along with her own son, Masruh. Barakah, better known as Umm-Ayman, had the privilege of looking after the Prophet (PBBUH) when he was living in his mother's house.

Halimah Al-Sa`adiyah

Halimah bint Abu Dhu'ayb from Banu Sa`d was the most well-known wet nurse of Prophet Muhammad (PBBUH). Her more familiar name was Halimah Al-Sa`adiyah. It was part of the culture of the noble Arabs of Makkah to send their children to the desert on the outskirts of the city, away from common city diseases and ailments, to raise them healthy in mind and body.

Halimah Al-Sa`adiyah came from the outskirts to Makkah together with ten other ladies from Banu Sa`d. They were seeking to work as wet nurses for the children of the noble Makkan families.

It was a year of drought and famine, and Halimah rode to Makkah on a very old camel, accompanied by a skinny old ewe. She brought her little boy with her, who was unable to get from his mother even a few drops of milk for nourishment.

Because of the condition of her mount, Halimah arrived later than all the other ladies from Banu Sa`d. She later learned from them that `Abdul-Muttalib's grandson was offered to all of them, but as soon as they heard that he was fatherless, they refused to take him and took another suckling instead.

When Halimah reached Makkah, the only baby left was the fatherless grandson of `Abdul-Muttalib. They assembled to depart for the desert, and Halimah was about to leave him as her female companions had done. Yet she told her husband, Al-Harith ibn `Abdul `Uzza, “By Allah, I would hate to return with my friends without having a baby to suckle. I shall go to this fatherless child and take him.”

The moment Halimah’s eyes fell on the infant, her heart filled with love and affection for him. Little did Halimah know that this fatherless infant was destined to be the mercy that Allah (the Most Merciful) has sent to all humanity.

Mercy Descending upon Halimah

As soon as Halimah lifted him into her arms, her breast filled with abundant milk. The Prophet (PBBUH) drank until he was satisfied. When she offered him her other breast, he refused, as if he wished to save it for his foster brother (Halimah’s son), who also drank his fill.

Their journey back to Banu Sa`d, on the outskirts of Makkah, began. As they set out, they suddenly realized that their old ewe was full of milk. Halimah’s husband, Al-Harith, milked the ewe, and they both drank from it until they were satisfied.

The blessings did not stop there; the old camel began accelerating until it outran all the other camels that had set out before it, much to the amazement of Halimah’s fellow travelers, who asked her if this was the same camel on which she had ridden to Makkah. She replied, “Yes, it is the same one.” They exclaimed, “By Allah, there is something the matter with it.”

By the time they reached the land of Banu Sa`d, rain had descended on its barren soil, making it green and fertile.

Halimah, herself recounting the blessings that Prophet Muhammad (PBBUH) brought to her and her household, said, “My sheep would go grazing and return in the evening fully fed and give us as much milk as we wished, although no one else around us was getting a single drop of milk. Their sheep used to return hungry, which made them say to their shepherds, ‘Woe to you! See where the sheep of the daughter of Abu Dhu’ayb are grazing and let your sheep graze with them.’ So they would graze their sheep in the same pasture area where my sheep grazed, but still their sheep would return hungry and my sheep would return full.”

Indeed, her people did not realize that living among them was the mercy that Allah (Glorified be He) had bestowed on existence.

The Prophet (PBBUH) at the Age of Two – Weaned and Brought Back to His Mother

Prophet Muhammad (PBBUH) continued to stay with Banu Sa`d, growing at a rate that exceeded that of his peers. He gained exceptional strength by the time he (PBBUH) attained the weaning age of two years. It was time for him to return to his mother in Makkah, but how could Halimah let go of such a source of blessings and goodness for herself and her family?

Although Halimah was eager as could be for the Prophet (PBBUH) to remain with them, she brought him back to his mother, Aminah. Then she spoke to her, and made her request, “If only you could leave my son with me until he grows strong, for I fear lest he be affected by the plague of Makkah.” Aminah agreed to her request and sent the Prophet (PBBUH) back to Banu Sa`d with Halimah.

The Prophet (PBBUH) at the Age of Four – the Splitting of the Chest Incident

The Prophet (PBBUH) returned to Banu Sa`d, and Halimah continued to look after and nurture him along with her son, `Abdullah and her daughter, Al-Shaima’, who became the Prophet’s (PBBUH) two foster siblings.

When the Prophet (PBBUH) attained four years of age, an incident of the most bewildering nature occurred to him. One day Halimah was alarmed by her son `Abdullah hurrying towards her frightened and shocked. “Mother! Mother! My brother Muhammad Al-Qurasyhi (from the Quraysh tribe) has been killed! Two men dressed in white garments took him away, laid him down, and split open his abdomen.”

Halimah hurried with her husband towards the Prophet (PBBUH), and there they found him standing, his face pale. They asked him, “**What is the matter, son?**” He (PBBUH) replied, “**Two men dressed in white garments came to me, laid me down, split open my stomach, took out something from it, cast it away, and then restored it (my stomach) as it was.**”

According to the narration by Muslim on the authority of Anas bin Malik (RA), Angel Jibril (Gabriel, PBUH) came to him while he was playing with other boys. He took hold of him, laid him down, cut open his chest, and took out his heart. He extracted from it a blood clot, and said, “This was Satan’s share of you.” He then washed it in a gold vessel filled with Zamzam water, joined it back together, and restored it to its place. The boys went running to his mother – meaning his wet nurse – and said, “Muhammad has been killed!” They hurried to him and found him pale-faced. Anas said, “I saw the mark of that stitching on his chest.” (Sahih Muslim)

Back to His Mother’s Loving Arms

This incident aroused concern in Halimah and her husband Al-Harith. After returning home with the Prophet (PBBUH), Al-Harith said, “O Halimah, I fear something might have befallen my son. Let us take him back to his mother before what we fear becomes apparent in him.”

They took him back to his mother Aminah, who, on seeing them, exclaimed, “Why have you brought him back after being so eager to keep him?” They told her what had happened. Aminah said, “Did you fear for him from Satan? No, by

Allah! Satan will never find a way to him. By Allah, there is something great about this son of mine.” The Prophet (PBBUH) remained with his mother, who surrounded him with her love until he reached the age of six.

The Prophet (PBBUH) at the Age of Six – the Death of His Mother Aminah

Out of loyalty to the memory of her departed husband, Aminah decided to visit his grave in Yathrib (Madinah). She set out to Yathrib with the Prophet (PBBUH) and his caretaker Umm Ayman. `Abdul-Muttalib sent with them additional *Mahram* men (male relatives to whom marriage is forbidden) to ensure their safe arrival. The Prophet (PBBUH) spent a month with his maternal uncles, during which he accompanied his mother to the grave of his father, whom he never met. On their way back, in an area known as Al-Abwa’ between Makkah and Madinah, Aminah fell severely ill and died.

To lose one’s mother is a calamitous loss. Full agony is experienced with the death of one’s compassionate mother. Thus, the Prophet (PBBUH) became an orphan.

When Aminah passed from this life, the beloved Prophet (PBBUH) was left with Umm Ayman, his mother’s devoted servant. He (PBBUH) returned to his homeland with teary eyes and a weeping heart, growing prematurely into an adult through the early sorrows he had so far endured.

Under the Guardianship of His Grandfather, `Abdul-Muttalib

The Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) came back to Makkah, his little body burdened with the worries of an orphan, and this made him even dearer to his grandfather, `Abdul-Muttalib. It engendered in him a deeper compassion and a preference for him over his own sons.

It was narrated that a carpet used to be specially laid out for `Abdul-Muttalib in the shade of the Ka`bah. His sons would sit around the edges of the carpet; as a sign of respect for their father, none of them would sit on it until he came out to them. The Prophet (PBBUH) would go and sit on the carpet when he was a little boy. His uncles would try to prevent him, but `Abdul-Muttalib would tell them, "Leave this son of mine." Then he would make Muhammad (PBBUH) sit next to him on the carpet and gently pat him on the back.

The Prophet (PBBUH) at the Age of Eight – the Death of `Abdul-Muttalib

The care and kind treatment of `Abdul-Muttalib helped lighten the grief and ease the burdens of Prophet Muhammad (PBBUH), but that did not last for long. Just two years after his mother's death, another great cornerstone of support for the Prophet (PBBUH) vanished. `Abdul-Muttalib died when the Prophet (PBBUH) was eight years old.

The little orphan boy walked behind the coffin of his grandfather – sad, silent, composed, and filled with patient tears.

What was the Divine wisdom behind taking away from the Prophet (PBBUH) so early in life the affection of a father, the tenderness of a mother, and the care of a grandfather? Addressing Prophet Musa (Moses, PBBUH), Allah (Glorified be He) says: "And I have chosen you for Myself (i.e., My service)." (Taha 20:41) Despite this, Allah (the Most Merciful) did not deprive Musa (PBBUH) of the love and care of a mother, or of living with parents among a family. Perhaps Allah wanted to directly fill that absence with His abundant love, care, and nurturing. Allah tells Prophet Muhammad (PBBUH) in one place in the Qur'an: "Did He (Allah) not find you (O Muhammad) an orphan and give you a refuge?" (Al-Duha 93:6) Allah (Exalted be He) also assures him in another place of His continuous care and protection, saying: "So be patient with your Lord's Decree, for verily, you are under Our Eyes." (Al-Tur 52:48)

In anticipation of this pivotal incident in his grandson's life, `Abdul-Muttalib had entrusted the guardianship of his grandson Muhammad (PBBUH) after his death to Abu Talib, the full brother of the Prophet's (PBBUH) father, `Abdullah. So the Prophet (PBBUH) moved from his grandfather's house to that of his paternal uncle with a grief-laden heart.

Under the Care of His Paternal Uncle, Abu Talib

Abu Talib was neither the eldest nor the wealthiest of his brothers, but he was the most generous and most respected among the Quraysh. For this reason, `Abdul-Muttalib entrusted him with the care of the Prophet (PBBUH). Abu Talib fulfilled his duty and lived up to his father's expectations. He loved the Prophet (PBBUH) and treated him as if he were one of his own children. Gradually, Abu Talib grew more and more attached to the Prophet (PBBUH), finding him to be peerless in his virtuousness, good judgement, beneficence, and compassion.

The Prophet (PBBUH) at the Age of Twelve – His First Trip to Al-Sham

At the age of twelve, the Prophet (PBBUH) accompanied his uncle Abu Talib on a trading trip to Al-Sham region (Greater Syria or the Levant). This trip took place during the hot desert summer under clear blue skies, with no clouds to be seen across the horizon, except for one single cloud that spread itself out like a canopy over Prophet Muhammad (PBBUH) throughout the journey.

Bahirah the Monk

As the travelling caravan reached Busra (a town in southern Syria), a Monk there named Bahirah noticed this extraordinary traveler who, of the whole caravan, was the only one to have a cloud above him, moving whenever he (PBBUH) moved, to keep him shaded throughout the journey. It dispersed only when he sheltered himself under the shade of a tree.

The learned Monk knew, based on Christian scriptures, that among these travelers was the Awaited Messenger. And so Monk Bahirah did something unprecedented; he invited the Qurayshi trading caravan into his hermitage. They accepted his invitation, and Bahirah began to converse privately with Prophet Muhammad (PBBUH).

Bahirah said, "O young man, in the Name of Al-Lat and Al-`Uzza (two idols of the pagan Arabs), tell me what I shall ask you." By using this oath, he wanted to test the Prophet's (PBBUH) position on idol worship.

The Prophet (PBBUH) replied, "**Do not ask me anything in the Name of Al-Lat and Al-`Uzza. I abhor nothing as much as them.**"

Bahirah said, "By what, then, should I adjure you?"

The Prophet (PBBUH) replied, "**By Allah (Glorified and Exalted be He) alone.**"

Bahirah started asking Prophet Muhammad (PBBUH) about his family, his status among his people, the dreams he was having in his sleep, and his stances and opinions until he became certain that the youth who sat in front of him was indeed the Awaited Prophet.

The monk's certainty was complete when he saw the seal of prophethood between the Prophet's shoulders, in the exact spot where it was described as being located (in the manuscript he had). He then rose and went to Abu Talib and asked him, "How is this boy related to you?"

Abu Talib replied, "He is my son."

Bahirah said, "His father cannot be alive."

Abu Talib said, "He is my paternal nephew. His father died when his mother was pregnant with him."

Bahirah said, “Go back with your nephew (to Makkah), for indeed he shall be a man of great importance.” He advised him to cut short his trip in the Levant because he feared for his safety from the Jews. Acting on his advice, Abu Talib sent the Prophet (PBBUH) back to Makkah with some of his servants.

The Prophet's (PBBUH) Youth and Early Manhood

His Youth Until the Age of Twenty

Allah (Glory be to Him) raised the Prophet (PBBUH) under His Special Care and refined his character to the maximum perfection possible for a human being. In his person and in his dealings, he (PBBUH) was esteemed as the best among his people; the most well-mannered, magnanimous, and generous. Throughout his community and all of Makkah, he was known as *Al-Sadiq Al-Amin* (the Truthful, Trustworthy one) because of his singular honesty, truthfulness, and trustworthiness.

The Prophet (PBBUH) never joined his peers in the common amusements and diversions of youth. Instead, he was often silent, spoke little, and was given to meditation and contemplation at an early age. He (PBBUH) never accepted the idolatry that his people practiced. He (PBBUH) never touched or bowed to an idol while circumambulating the Ka`bah. He (PBBUH) never attended any of his people's religious ceremonies or festivities, nor did he participate in any of their pagan rituals. He (PBBUH) only performed the standing ritual on Mount Arafat during the pre-Islamic pilgrimage.

Like most of his predecessors along the path of prophethood, Prophet Muhammad (PBBUH) spent his days working as a shepherd, a profession that trained him to be contemplative and reflective. He used to look after both his family's sheep and those owned by other people from Makkah. Recalling these days with joy, Prophet Muhammad (PBBUH) said, **“Every prophet that Allah sent tended sheep** (at one time or another during his life).” (Sahih Al-Bukhari) He (PBBUH) also said, **“Musa (Moses PBBUH) was commissioned with prophethood while he was a shepherd, and Dawud (David PBBUH) was commissioned with prophethood while he was a shepherd. I, too, became a**

Prophet during the time I was tending my family's sheep at Ajjad (a district in Makkah).” (Al-Adab Al-Mufrad)

He (PBBUH) lifted himself above all worldly pleasures and attachments. From a tender age, fate directed him towards the great day when Allah (Exalted be He) would assign him to convey His Message of guidance and truth to all humankind.

The Prophet (PBBUH) at Twenty – the *Fijar* War (the Sacrilegious War)

This war was so named because it was fought in violation of the sanctity of the Sacred Months. Since pre-Islamic times, hostilities and bloodshed were considered forbidden during the Sacred Months (Dhul Qa`dah – Dhul Hijjah – Muharram – Rajab). But a battle broke out between the Quraysh and the Kinanah on one side against Banu Qais `Aylan on the other. The two parties remained in a state of continuous war with no decisive victor until they both agreed to cease fighting and reconcile. In the terms of their agreement, the dead on both sides were to be counted and the side that sustained the most casualties should be compensated with blood money. The pact was fulfilled, and the war ended.

The Prophet (PBBUH) was aged twenty when this war erupted. He used to prepare the arrows for his paternal uncles, and cover and protect them from the arrows of their enemies.

The *Fudul* Alliance

The *Fijar* war undermined the ability of the Quraysh, leaving its members feeling divided and vulnerable to external interference from other Arab tribes. To address this problem, they held a meeting in the house of `Abdullah ibn Jada`an, one of the elderly men of the Quraysh, in which all the participants pledged to act as one hand in support of the oppressed against the oppressor until the wrongs were redressed and the rights restored.

According to biographical narratives, the main trigger for the *Fudul* Alliance was an injustice done to a Yemeni trader who came from the Zabid region to Makkah with some merchandise. A notable clansman known as Al-`As ibn Wa'il bought his merchandise and then refused to pay for it. The trader did not give up and decided to protest to the leaders of Makkah.

The aggrieved trader sought the help of the clans of Banu `Abd Ad-Dar, Banu Makhzum, and Banu `Adi, but they all refused to support him. He then sought the help of the Quraysh. Following this incident, the clans of Banu Hashim, Banu Zuhrah, and Banu Taym ibn Murrah convened in the house of `Abdullah bin Jada`an and pledged to stand united in the face of oppression until rights were restored and justice delivered to any wronged person (no matter to what tribe he belonged).

Then they went to Al-`As ibn Wa'il and seized back from him the unlawfully appropriated merchandise and returned it to its rightful owner. Afterwards, the people of Makkah referred to that incident by saying, "These people intervened in an issue of *Fadl* (favor, virtuousness, graciousness)." It was thus named the *Fudul* Alliance.

The Prophet (PBBUH) personally witnessed the formation of this alliance. It was narrated that he praised it by saying, **"I witnessed a pact in the house of `Abdullah ibn Jada`an which I would not like to exchange (my part in it) for red camels¹. If I were called to it now in Islam, I would respond."**²

The Prophet (PBBUH) Around the Age of Twenty-Five – His Marriage to Lady Khadijah bint Khuwaylid

Her name was Khadijah bint (daughter of) Khuwaylid ibn Assad ibn `Abdul `Uzza (the brother of `Abd Manaf ibn Qusay, and so her lineage met that of the Prophet (PBBUH) at his fifth grandfather, Qusai ibn Kilab.

¹ Red camels in Arabia were proverbial for the most treasured wealth.

² Al-Sunan Al-Kubra by Imam Al-Bayhaqi.

The paternal cousin of Lady Khadijah, named Waraqah ibn Nawfal, was one of four companions from the Quraysh who rejected idol worship and was dissatisfied with the practice of placing idols around the Ka`bah. Besides Waraqah, the other three men were: Zaid ibn `Amr ibn Nufail (the paternal uncle of `Umar ibn Al-Khattab), `Uthman ibn Huwarith, and `Ubaidullah ibn Jahsh. They firmly believed that people had deviated from the religion of their father, Prophet Ibrahim (Abraham, PBBUH), and they set out in search of the true religion of Ibrahim. After a long quest, Waraqah embraced Christianity.

Quite evidently, Lady Khadijah bint Khuwaylid was of the noblest birth and highest status among the women of the Quraysh. She was raised in a home that emphasized virtuous manners, righteousness, and piety, and kept itself away from the wrong practices of the Qurayshi community.

Lady Khadijah had been married and widowed twice to men from the clan of Banu Makhzum. She was one of the wealthiest people in Makkah, well known among them for her good reputation and sublime manners that she was called 'the Pure One.' Many chiefs of the Quraysh proposed marriage to her, but she constantly declined their marriage proposals, preferring to dedicate her time to looking after her children and developing her business. She was careful to choose only men credited with honesty and trustworthiness to go out and trade on her behalf.

As the time neared for the annual trading caravan of the Quraysh to Al-Sham, Lady Khadijah began thinking about whom she would choose to represent her business on this trip. She had heard about the Prophet (PBBUH) and his praiseworthy qualities of honesty and righteousness, and so she sent him a message asking him to go out on her behalf and represent her business. She offered him double the remuneration she usually paid.

The Prophet (PBBUH) had a habit of never making a decision without consulting his uncle Abu Talib, who, on learning about the proposal, was

extremely supportive, and said to him, “This is a bounty that Allah (Glorified and Exalted be He) has provided for you.”

The Prophet (PBBUH) Trading on Behalf of Lady Khadijah

The Prophet (PBBUH) was twenty-five when he went out as a merchant for Lady Khadijah on a trade trip with her young servant Maisarah, who was instructed to neither disobey nor disagree with the Prophet (PBBUH).

The caravan departed for the Levant, taking the same route that the Prophet (PBBUH) had taken several years earlier when he was aged twelve. This revived his memories of his first trip with his uncle Abu Talib.

With his usual exemplary integrity and good character, the Prophet (PBBUH) traded successfully, achieving unprecedented profits for Lady Khadijah. This earned him the respect and love of all those who travelled with him on this trip, especially Maisarah.

On returning to Makkah, Maisarah, impressed by the outstanding personality and qualities of Prophet Muhammad (PBBUH), reported to Lady Khadijah all he had witnessed, of the cloud that shaded him alone out of all the travelers throughout the journey, moving with him wherever he moved, and of how exceptionally well-mannered and courteous he (PBBUH) was.

All this increased Lady Khadijah’s recognition of how far Muhammad (PBBUH) surpassed other Makkan men in virtue. It put him higher in her estimation. She was now forty years old, and although she consistently received and turned down one marriage proposal after another from the most prominent men of the Quraysh, she began to seriously consider marrying this youth (PBBUH).

The Prophet's (PBBUH) Marriage to Lady Khadijah

One biographical account stated that Lady Khadijah talked to her sister Halah about this issue. However, according to the best-known account (by Al-Tabaqat Al-Kubra book), she opened up the topic with her close friend Nafisah bint Muniyah. So Nafisah indirectly approached the Prophet (PBBUH) on Lady Khadijah's behalf. She asked him, "O Muhammad, what is preventing you from getting married?" The Prophet (PBBUH) replied, "**I do not possess the means to marry.**" She replied, "If you were spared that, and you were offered beauty, wealth, honor, and equal status, would you accept?" The Prophet (PBBUH) replied, "**Who is she?**" She replied, "Khadijah." The Prophet (PBBUH) said, "**How could this be possible for me?**" Nafisah said, "Leave it to me." He (PBBUH) replied, "**I will do this.**"

The Prophet (PBBUH) reacted favorably to the proposal, and Nafisah returned to Khadijah with the good news of his willingness to marry her. Khadijah then asked to see the Prophet (PBBUH), and she said to him, "O my cousin, I wish to marry you because of your kinship (with me), your honorable position among your people, your honesty, your good manners, and your truthfulness."¹ The Prophet (PBBUH) discussed the matter with his uncle Abu Talib and, as usual, sought his advice. Abu Talib welcomed this marriage, and they decided on a date to go and formally propose to Lady Khadijah's family.

The Prophet (PBBUH), accompanied by a delegation of his paternal uncles, visited Lady Khadijah's paternal uncle, `Amr ibn Assad, and her paternal cousin, Waraqah ibn Nawfal, to negotiate the marriage.

Abu Talib stood up to speak on behalf of his nephew, saying, "All praise be to Allah, Who has made us from the offspring of Ibrahim and the seed of Isma`il. When any man is weighed against this nephew of mine, Muhammad ibn `Abdullah outweighs him in honor, nobleness, virtue, and intellect. If he is not wealthy, wealth is a vanishing shadow; something transitory. Muhammad is a

¹ Sirat Ibn Hisham.

man whose lineage you know well, and he is proposing marriage to Khadijah, daughter of Khuwaylid.”

At this point, Waraqah ibn Nawfal stood up and said, “All praise is due to Allah Who has made us as you have said and has favored us over those whom you have mentioned, for we, indeed, are the masters and leaders of the Arabs. And indeed, you are a people worthy of all this. Our clan does not deny your merits, nor does anyone else dispute your lofty status and distinction. We wish to be bound to you in kinship and in honor. So, bear witness, O people of the Quraysh! I give Khadijah, daughter of Khuwaylid, in marriage to Muhammad ibn `Abdullah.”

With this, the marriage of the Prophet (PBBUH) to Lady Khadijah was concluded and a *Mahr* (bridal gift; dowry) of twenty young camels was announced.

The Prophet (PBBUH) was twenty-five years old. He (PBBUH) moved from Abu Talib’s house to Khadijah’s house to begin this new chapter of his life... that of marriage and paternity.

The Prophet (PBBUH) as a Husband

The newly wedded husband and wife lived a pleasant and stable life. Lady Khadijah admired the high morals and good character of Prophet Muhammad (PBBUH) and his inner riches of loyalty, sincerity, and good companionship. She personally witnessed that everything she had heard about the Prophet (PBBUH) before marriage was not just true, but was a fraction of the reality of his magnificent character and perfect traits.

The Prophet (PBBUH) continued trading on behalf of Lady Khadijah, and she entrusted him with all her business affairs. In fact, there was no distinction between his and her money.

The Prophet (PBBUH) was extremely generous and charitable, constantly giving to and supporting the poor and the needy. He (PBBUH) always maintained good relations with his family and acquaintances. His life abounds with plenty of examples of this, some of which are recounted here:

Barakah, “Umm Ayman”

The Prophet (PBBUH) freed his female slave, Barakah, who had passed to him by inheritance from his deceased father. She looked after him following his mother’s death. He (PBBUH) treated her as his mother, and for the rest of his life he called her “mother.” When she became manumitted, the Prophet (PBBUH) suggested that she get married. She married and bore a son, Ayman, and became known as “Umm Ayman” (the mother of Ayman).

Halimah Al-Sa`adiyah

When the Prophet’s (PBBUH) wet nurse, Halimah Al-Sa`adiyah, learned about his marriage, she came to visit him. The Prophet (PBBUH) was extremely kind to her and encouraged Lady Khadijah to assist Halimah with the adversity she was facing due to the widespread drought that had affected Banu Sa`d. Lady Khadijah made a generous gift of forty sheep and a camel to her, along with provisions for the return journey.

Zaid ibn Harithah

Zaid was kidnapped as a boy by some raiding horsemen while he was accompanying his mother on a visit to her tribe of Banu Ma`n. Eventually, he was sold as a slave in Makkah to Khadijah’s nephew, Hakim ibn Hizam ibn Khuwaylid. In turn, he gifted him to his paternal aunt Khadijah. Zaid felt at home in Khadijah’s house due to the good treatment he received from her. When she married the Prophet (PBBUH), she gifted Zaid to him. This, of course, happened before Islam.

Zaid Prefers the Prophet (PBBUH) over His Own Family

Time passed, and during one of the Hajj seasons, some members of Zaid's tribe came to Makkah on pilgrimage, where they saw and recognized Zaid. Once they returned home from Hajj, they informed Harithah of his son's whereabouts.

Harithah and his brother immediately set out for Makkah and hurried to meet the Prophet (PBBUH) and ransom the boy. They said to him, "O son of 'Abdul-Muttalib! O son of the chief of your people! You are the people and neighbors of Allah's Sanctuary. You set captives free and feed the hungry. We have come to you regarding our son who is with you. Would you grant us a favor and show kindness to us in his ransom?"

The Prophet (PBBUH) tranquilly replied, **"Ask Zaid to come here and make him choose between you and me. If he chooses you, he is free to go with you without ransom. But if he chooses me, by Allah, I am not one who chooses ransom over someone who has chosen me."**

The Prophet (PBBUH) sent for Zaid, and straightaway the young boy recognized his father and uncle. The Prophet (PBBUH) then addressed Zaid, explaining to him that the choice was his to make; **"I am the one whom you have known and whose companionship you have experienced, so choose either me or them."**

Zaid replied, to the astonishment of his family, "I will not choose anyone over you. You are like a father and an uncle to me." Zaid's choice shocked his father and uncle – he chose slavery over freedom, and over his own father, his own uncle, and his entire kinsfolk! This is conceivable in the light of this fact: Zaid was growing attached to the warmth that he felt with the man whom Allah (Exalted be He) sent as a mercy to existence. Zaid said, "Yes, having seen what I have seen of this man, I would never choose anyone over him."

Upon hearing this, the Prophet (PBBUH) took Zaid by the hand to the assembly place of the Quraysh and announced, **"O all those who are present,**

bear witness that Zaid (hereby) is my (adopted) son. He will inherit from me and I from him." This pleased Zaid's father and paternal uncle. They departed, satisfied.

From that time on, Zaid was called Zaid ibn Muhammad until Islam came and the following Qur'anic verse annulling adoption was revealed: **"Call them after their true fathers; that is more just in Allah's Sight."** (Al-Ahzab 33:5) However, the epithet **'the Beloved One of the Prophet'** was forever attached to Zaid.

The Prophet (PBBUH) Taking `Ali ibn Abu Talib Under His Care

When Abu Talib, the Prophet's (PBBUH) uncle, reached the age of sixty-five and was no longer able to travel on trading journeys, his wealth started diminishing. Despite this, he kept his doors open to guests and wayfarers.

The Prophet (PBBUH) sensed the difficulty his uncle was having. He (PBBUH) recalled the days in which he loved and cared for him as much as his own children, and he wished to return the favor. The Prophet (PBBUH) went to his other uncle, Al-`Abbas, and said to him, **"O uncle, your brother Abu Talib has many children, and you see how people have been afflicted by this crisis. So, let us go to him and lighten the number of his dependents. I shall take one of his sons, and you take one, and we will take care of them for him."**

Al-`Abbas agreed to this suggestion. Then they both went and made it to Abu Talib, and he accepted. The Prophet (PBBUH) took `Ali, who was seven at the time, and Al-`Abbas took Ja`far.

These are just some of the many situations demonstrating the Prophet's (PBBUH) kindness and concern for his relatives, the poor, and the needy.

The Prophet's (PBBUH) Children

Al-Qasim: After two years of marriage, Lady Khadijah longed to have children with the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) to deepen and strengthen their relationship. She supplicated to Allah (Exalted be He) to grant her a child, and Allah answered her supplication and gave her a son – Al-Qasim. From that day, the Prophet (PBBUH) was nicknamed Abul-Qasim (the father of Al-Qasim). The Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) had also four daughters from his wife Khadijah. They were:

Zainab: His eldest daughter; the Prophet (PBBUH) was blessed with Zainab one year after the birth of Al-Qasim.

Ruqaiyah: His second daughter; she was born two years after Zainab.

Umm Kulthum: His third daughter; she was born after Ruqaiyah.

Fatimah: His youngest daughter; she was born after Umm Kulthum, and was the fifth and last child of the Prophet (PBBUH) with Lady Khadijah.

It was also reported that the Prophet (PBBUH) had another son with Lady Khadijah, named `Abdullah, who was given the title 'Al-Tahir' (the Pure).

All the Prophet's (PBBUH) children were from Lady Khadijah, except Ibrahim, the son of Mariyah the Copt – whom the Prophet (PBBUH) married at a later time. All his sons died in their early childhood, and all his daughters died during his lifetime, except Fatimah, who died six months after the Prophet's (PBBUH) death. All his daughters grew up to witness and embrace Islam, and later in their lives they emigrated with the Prophet (PBBUH) to Madinah.

The Prophet (PBBUH) at the Age of Thirty-Five - the Rebuilding of the Ka`bah

The Prophet (PBBUH) did not stop mixing with the people of Makkah and taking part in the general affairs of daily life.

When the Prophet (PBBUH) was aged thirty-five, serious damage occurred to the Ka`bah that brought it to the forefront of the concerns of the Makkans, owing to the high place it occupied in their souls.

In the winter of that year, it rained heavily over the mountains of Makkah. This resulted in severe floodwaters coming over the city and flowing down the walls of the Sacred House, almost causing its walls to collapse. The Quraysh thus had to renovate the building of the Ka`bah. Huge sums of money were collected to finance this undertaking, and it was unanimously agreed that no ill-gotten money would be used in re-building the Ka`bah, such as earnings from prostitution, usury, or dishonest dealings.

A significant obstacle then faced the Quraysh. In order to renovate and rebuild the Ka`bah, deconstruction was first necessary. The Quraysh were extremely hesitant to do this step after witnessing what had befallen Abraha when he came with his army and attempted to destroy the Holy Ka`bah.

But this situation was different. Abraha wanted to pull down the Ka`bah for the purpose of destruction, while the Quraysh wanted to do so for the purpose of renovation and reconstruction.

The first of the Quraysh to courageously go ahead and begin to demolish the Ka`bah was Al-Walid ibn Al-Mughirah, the father of Khalid ibn Al-Walid. People watched anxiously, holding their breath, waiting to see what sort of evil would descend upon him for what he was doing. The next day, when they saw that Al-Walid was safe and sound and nothing had happened to him as they had feared, each of them held his axe and proceeded with the demolition process until they reached the foundations laid by Prophet Ibrahim (PBBUH).

The process of rebuilding on the old foundations commenced. The reconstruction of the Ka`bah walls was divided among the tribes, with each tribe allotted a corner of the Ka`bah to reconstruct. The Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) contributed and assisted in moving the stones and rocks that were to be used in the rebuilding.

The Replacement of the Black Stone

A Roman carpenter called Baqum led the building work, and when they reached the final step of returning the Black Stone to its original place, they strongly disagreed as to who should have the honor of doing so. Their disputation continued until the conflict almost escalated into a civil war. An elderly man who held a respectable position and authoritative opinion among them intercepted. His name was Abu Umayyah ibn Al-Mughirah Al-Makhzumy. He said to them, "Let the next person to enter (the Sacred House) through the gate of Al-Safa be the judge among you in this matter."

They agreed and waited anxiously to see who this person would be. Much to their relief, it was Prophet Muhammad (PBBUH). They ecstatically shouted, "This is *Al-Amin* (the Trustworthy One). This is Muhammad ibn `Abdullah. We accept him as our judge."

The issue of conflict was recounted to the Prophet (PBBUH), and Allah (Exalted be He) inspired him with a solution that would satisfy all parties. He (PBBUH) took off his cloak, spread it on the ground, and placed the Black Stone in the middle of it. He asked the leaders of each clan present to take hold of one corner of this cloth, and they all lifted the stone in unison towards its position in the corner of the Ka`bah. When they had lifted the cloth to the right level, the Prophet (PBBUH) took the stone with his blessed hands, laid it in its original place, and sealed it.

All the clans were satisfied and peace and harmony was soon restored. The rebuilding of the Ka`bah was complete and the Quraysh was spared from the civil war that had been about to flare up.

This incident was a testament to the lofty status the Prophet (PBBUH) enjoyed among the people of Makkah, and a mark of their esteem for his serenity and goodwill.

The Prophet (PBBUH) at the Age of Thirty-Nine – the Marriage of Zainab

The years passed by and the Prophet (PBBUH) continued to participate in the issues of daily life of the Makkans. He (PBBUH) increasingly found Khadijah to be the best wife one could have. By that time Zainab, his eldest daughter, had reached the age of ten and suitors began to make offers of marriage, for they all wanted to attain the honor of marrying into such a gracious family.

Zainab's maternal cousin (the son of Khadijah's sister Halah), Abu Al-`Aas ibn Al-Rabi`, was the one who had the privilege of marrying her. He was one of the few honorable and wealthy men of rank in Makkah.

The joyful marriage celebration took place. Lady Khadijah gifted her daughter a necklace. Later, we shall see how this necklace helped release Zainab's husband from imprisonment in the Battle of Badr.

The Prophet (PBBUH) at the age of Thirty-Nine and a Half – the Marriages of Ruqaiyah and Umm Kulthum

Six months after Zainab's marriage, a delegation from the clan of Banu Hashim came to visit the Prophet (PBBUH), with his uncle Abu Talib at the head of it. He said, "My nephew, you have married Zainab to Abu Al-`Aas ibn Al-Rabi` and he is indeed a worthy son-in-law. Yet your paternal cousins see that they have a right over you similar to that of Khadijah's nephew, and they are no

less than him in noble lineage and status.” To this, the Prophet (PBBUH) replied, **“You have spoken the truth, O uncle.”**

They asked to marry Ruqaiyah and Umm Kulthum to `Utbah and `Utaibah, the two sons of the Prophet’s (PBBUH) paternal uncle, Abu Lahab. The marriage went forward despite Lady Khadijah’s fear for her two daughters from Umm Jamil, Abu Lahab’s wife. She was an ill-tempered woman with a harsh tongue, bent on imposing her authority on everyone around her.

The Stages of Prophethood

First Signs of Divine Inspiration and Prophethood

As the years passed, the Prophet (PBBUH) grew through thought, reflection, and contemplation. He (PBBUH) was always quiet and meditative about people and what they worshipped. Such habit of meditating endowed him with an uncommon share of insight, wisdom, and purpose.

The Prophet (PBBUH) went on living his life among people, engaging only in what was wholesome and useful, and staying away from what was unwholesome and frivolous. He (PBBUH) never drank alcohol, or partook in offerings sacrificed to idols, or ate from the meat that was slaughtered in their name. He (PBBUH) also never attended any pagan celebrations or festivities for the idols his people worshipped, for the thing he (PBBUH) loathed most was idols.

The Prophet (PBBUH) Meditating in the Cave of Hira'

Prophet Muhammad (PBBUH) began spending time in solitude and reflection. At that time, it was an Arab custom that their thinkers and intellectuals cut communication for a certain period in the year to ponder and worship. They called this kind of seclusion *Tahannuth* or *Tabannuf*.

At the very top of Mount Hira', about two miles from Makkah, the Prophet (PBBUH) found a cave that was the perfect place to enter into profound and thoughtful meditations.

He (PBBUH) used to stay in the Cave of Hira' during the entire month of Ramadan every year with few provisions. In doing so, he found his long-sought aim of peace, away from the bustle of the city and the clamor of everyday life. He (PBBUH) was able to seek the truth, and only the truth, without hindrances or outside interferences.

The Prophet (PBBUH) carried on this practice, spending Ramadan in the Cave of Hira', until he attained the age of thirty-nine and a half, at which point he started seeing true visions in his sleep. Regarding this period, Lady `Aishah (may Allah be pleased with her) narrated: "The commencement of divine revelation to the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) was in the form of true visions in his sleep. Every vision he saw came true, like the break of dawn." (Sahih Al-Bukhari) These visions continued for six months, until the divine revelation started descending.

True dreams constituted one out of the component parts of prophethood, as Messenger Muhammad (PBBUH) said, **"A righteous vision (dream) is one of the forty-six parts of prophethood."** (Sahih Al-Bukhari)

The Prophet (PBBUH) had true dreams during the first six months of his 23-period of prophethood; so, true dreams constituted 1/46 of prophethood and marked its beginning. Indeed, the Prophet's (PBBUH) words were the truth.

It was all within Allah's Plan to remove the Prophet (PBBUH) from life's distractions and prepare him for the role of becoming His Messenger. This way, his mind would take it on gradually and not be overwhelmed by suddenly receiving divine revelations.

The Beginning of Divine Revelation

The Prophet (PBBUH) reached forty years of age, the typical age of peak maturity at which prophets were usually commissioned by Allah (Exalted be He) to deliver His Message. During one Ramadan, on a Monday night, most likely on the eve of the 27th of Ramadan (according to the opinion of Imam Abu Hanifah), Prophet Muhammad (PBBUH) was at his habitual retreat in the Cave of Hira` when Angel Jibril (Gabriel, PBUH) descended upon him with the first divine words.

Angel Jibril (PBUH) came to him, held him tight until the Prophet (PBBUH) could not bear it anymore, and then released him and said, **“Read.”** The Prophet (PBBUH) replied, **“I am not a reader.”** (i.e., I do not know how to read.)

Angel Jibril powerfully embraced the Prophet (PBBUH) a second time until he could not bear it anymore, and then he released him and said, **“Read.”** The Prophet (PBBUH) again replied, **“I am not a reader.”** Angel Jibril powerfully embraced him a third time until he could not bear it anymore, and then he released the Prophet (PBBUH).

The First Revealed Words of the Qur’an

Jibril (PBUH) then said, **“Read in the Name of your Lord Who created. He created the human from `Alaq (literally, clinging clot). Read, and your Lord is the Most Generous, Who has taught by the pen. He has taught the human that which he knew not.”** (Al-`Alaq 96: 1-5)

This was the first descent of the divine guidance and the revelation of the first Qur’anic verses to Prophet Muhammad (PBBUH). They became inscribed on his heart in letters of light. **“As though they were written in my heart,”** said the Prophet (PBBUH).

Divine revelation began with an order from Allah (Glorified be He) to read. In this context, reading holds the wider meaning of learning, exploring, acquiring knowledge, thinking, analyzing, and drawing conclusions. These are the infrastructure for building and developing nations and civilizations. Regretfully we, as Muslims, have now deteriorated in that regard. Several nations have overtaken us through their consistent and diligent efforts in the research arena.

We pray that one day we will return to the teachings of the Qur'an and, as our predecessors were, truly become the worldwide nation of **"Read."**

The Prophet (PBBUH) Hurrying to Lady Khadijah

After the first experience of divine inspiration and communication with heaven, the Prophet (PBBUH) left the cave in haste and walked along the mountain passes. When he (PBBUH) was halfway up in the mountain, he heard a voice calling him, **"O Muhammed, you are the Messenger of Allah (Glorified and Exalted be He) and I am Jibril (Angel Gabriel)."** The Prophet (PBBUH) raised his head to the sky and saw Jibril (PBUH) in his angel form. He (PBBUH) tried to avert his face from him, but everywhere he looked across the horizon, he saw Jibril (PBUH). The Prophet (PBBUH) stood transfixed, moving neither forward nor backward.

In the meantime, Lady Khadijah had grown worried. She had sent a messenger to the Prophet (PBBUH) in the cave to replenish his food supply, but the messenger had not found him there. Lady Khadijah became increasingly anxious about what could have happened to him.

"Cover Me! Wrap Me Up!"

While Lady Khadijah was in this anxious state, the Prophet (PBBUH) returned home to her, saying, **"Cover me, cover me."** He (PBBUH) was shivering in fright and astonishment at what had just taken place. Lady Khadijah

asked him what was wrong, but he (PBBUH) just answered, **“Cover me! Cover me! Wrap me up and pour cold water on me.”** She covered him with a cloth, and the Prophet (PBBUH) continued to shake as if feverish. Then, after calming down, he (PBBUH) narrated to her what he had seen and confessed his fears that he (PBBUH) might have become possessed by madness.

As always, his great wife Khadijah was like an angel of mercy and a haven of peace for him, giving strength and comfort to his gracious heart in a moment of fear. She had no apprehensions or suspicions at all. Rather, she looked admiringly at the Prophet (PBBUH) and reassured him with the words, “Never, but rather rejoice! By Allah, Allah will never disgrace you; for you keep good relations with your kith and kin, speak the truth, support the needy, provide for the destitute, entertain your guests generously, and assist calamity-stricken people.” (Sahih Muslim)

Khadijah stood by her husband and provided him with the necessary moral and emotional support. Thus, the Mother of all Believers established herself as a magnificent model of how a wife should be with her husband in times of crisis.

With her reassuring words and calm manner, the Prophet (PBBUH) regained his peace. He (PBBUH) felt tired and in need of sleep, and he slept tranquilly.

The Statement of Waraqah ibn Nawfal

Khadijah gazed at the Prophet (PBBUH) while he slept. Her heart was filled with compassion and hope at what she had heard from him. Once she saw him sound asleep and serene, she rushed to her paternal cousin, Waraqah bin Nawfal.

As mentioned earlier, Waraqah had embraced the Christian faith during his quest for truth. He had learned the Gospel and translated some portions of it into Arabic. On hearing from Lady Khadijah what the Prophet (PBBUH) had seen and heard, he said to her, “Holy, Holy! By Him in Whose Hand is Waraqah’s soul, if what you say is true, Khadijah, there has come to him the greatest Namus

— meaning by Namus, the Angel of Revelation, Gabriel — who came to Musa (Moses, PBBUH). Indeed, he is the Prophet of this time. Tell him to stand firm.”¹

Khadijah returned home carrying the good news to the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH), but she found him still asleep. Suddenly, he was shaken from the placidity of sleep, with sweat all over his forehead, to listen to the Angel revealing to him: “O you who covers himself [with a garment]! Arise and warn! And your Lord glorify. And your clothing purify. And uncleanness avoid. And do not confer favor to acquire more. And be patient for the sake of your Lord.” (Al-Muddathir 74:1-7)

The End of the Time of Rest

These Qur’anic verses take the form of military commands, of few words and a quick tone, so that the response comes as swiftly as the order.

In response, the Prophet (PBBUH) promptly got up from his sleep, and when Lady Khadijah urged him to resume his rest, he said, **“The time for sleep and rest has ended, O Khadijah. Jibril (Gabriel, PBUH) has commanded me to warn people and to call them to Allah and His Worship alone. Whom shall I call? And who will respond to me?”**

Khadijah believed in the Prophet’s (PBBUH) message and was the first person on earth to embrace Islam. She then went on to tell the Prophet (PBBUH) what had happened between her and her paternal cousin, Waraqah, and the mission of prophethood that had been assigned to him.

One day following this event, the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) went out to circumambulate the Ka`bah, where he met Waraqah bin Nawfal and described to him the occurrence of divine revelation. Waraqah said, “This is the Namus (the Angel of Revelation, Gabriel) who came down to Musa (PBBUH). I wish

¹ Al-Sirah Al-Nabawiyah by Ibn Hisham.

that I were young and could live until the time when your people drive you out.” The Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) asked, “**Will they drive me out?**” Waraqah said, “Yes. No man has ever come with that which you have brought without being treated with hostility. If I should live to see that day, I will support you strongly.” (Sahih Al-Bukhari)

But Waraqah died shortly after this encounter, before the message of Islam was proclaimed and preached.

The Beginning of the Era of Prophethood

The Prophet (PBBUH) became certain that he was the Chosen Messenger of the time and the final Prophet sent from Allah (Exalted be He) to humanity. From that time on, the divine revelations started descending successively. On his way back home, there was not a tree or a stone that Prophet Muhammad (PBBUH) passed by that did not greet and salute him with “Peace be to you, O Messenger of Allah.” This reassured him of his status and honor in Allah’s Sight.¹

Ablution and Prayer

Since Prophet Muhammad (PBBUH) was the man chosen to perpetuate and convey the message of Islam, it was important to clarify for him the correct manner of worshiping the One True God.

According to the historian Ibn Ishaq, at the beginning of the revelation Jibril (PBBUH) came to him (in human form) while he was in the upper part of Makkah and taught him ablution and prayer. Jibril (PBBUH) struck the valley ground with his heel, causing a spring of water to gush out. Jibril performed ablution while the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) watched. Then the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) performed ablution in the same manner as Jibril. After this, Jibril stood and led him in a prayer in the form of two *Ra`kabs* (units of prayer) with four prostrations. He told the Prophet (PBBUH) to pray in this same manner twice a day – two *Ra`kabs* in the morning and another two in the evening.

When the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) came home to Khadijah, he (PBBUH) showed her how to perform ablution for prayer, the same way Angel

¹ Tarikh Madinat Dimashq by Ibn `Asakir.

Jibril (PBUH) had taught him. She observed and followed the steps for ablution. Then he (PBBUH) led her in prayer in the same manner as Angel Jibril led him.¹

Suspension of the Revelation

For a period, the revelation temporarily ceased and the Prophet (PBBUH) began to worry, thinking that Allah (Glorified be He) had forsaken him. It was narrated that Umm Jamil, the wife of his paternal uncle, Abu Lahab, tauntingly said to the Prophet (PBBUH), “It appears your Satan has forsaken you.”

Lack of contact with the source of power, which was his chief support, deeply distressed the Prophet (PBBUH). He (PBBUH) resumed his visits to the Cave of Hira’, seeking his Lord’s Mercy and pondering why Allah (Exalted be He) had abandoned him after He had chosen him to deliver His Message to humankind. Khadijah was not any less worried than the Prophet (PBBUH).

However, after several days of suspension, the revelation descended once again and Jibril (PBUH) was sent down with the following reassuring verses of the Noble Qur’an: “By the morning brightness. And by the night when it covers with darkness. Your Lord has neither forsaken nor is He displeased with you. And indeed, the Hereafter is better for you than the present (life of this world). And verily, your Lord will give you so amply that you shall be well-pleased.” (Al-Duha 93:1-5)

¹ Al-Sirah Al-Nabawiyah by Ibn Hisham.

The Beginning of Preaching Islam Among the People

The Prophet's (PBBUH) Strategy of Calling People to Allah

For the first three years, the message of Islam was preached secretly and on an individual basis. It was dependent on the eminence, rather than the quantity, of the personalities persuaded to join it.

Those early believers and Companions of the Prophet (PBBUH) were the foundations of the religion of Islam. They were the ones entrusted with the task of spreading it to the rest of humanity. After three years, the number of Muslims was no more than one hundred and thirty persons.

Despite this, and without exaggeration, each one of them was worth a thousand believers or more because of the strength of their belief in Allah (the Most High) and His Religion.

The Foremost Believers

Some of the Honorable Companions Who Were the First to Join Islam:

Firstly, Early Muslims from the Prophet's (PBBUH) Household

Lady Khadijah (RA)

Lady Khadijah (RA), as previously mentioned, was the first person to embrace Islam. She provided the strongest and most essential support for the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) in his mission to establish Islam. After Jibril (PBBUH) taught the Prophet (PBBUH) how to pray, she used to pray with him.

`Ali ibn Abu Talib (RA)

`Ali lived in the Prophet's (PBBUH) household. He was a young boy of ten when prophethood was bestowed upon Muhammad (PBBUH). On one occasion, when the Prophet (PBBUH) was leading Lady Khadijah in prayer, `Ali (RA) saw them bowing, prostrating, and reciting some of the revealed verses of the Qur'an. Once they had finished, `Ali (RA) asked, "O Muhammad, what is this?" The Prophet (PBBUH) replied, **"This is Allah's Religion, which He Himself has chosen and with which He sent His Messengers. I call you to Allah alone, Who has no partners; to worship Him and to reject Al-Lat and Al-'Uzza (two idols of the pagan Arabs)."** `Ali asked the Prophet (PBBUH) to give him some time to think the matter over.

It took `Ali (RA) only one night to deliberate and decide. In the morning, he came to the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) and announced his embrace of Islam. He was the first boy to enter Islam.

Zaid bin Harithah (RA)

After `Ali (RA), Zaid (RA) was the next to embrace Islam. He was the Prophet's (PBBUH) freed slave and adopted son.

The Daughters of the Prophet (PBBUH)

All the Prophet's (PBBUH) daughters became Muslim, and thus every member of the Prophet's (PBBUH) household was now Muslim.

Secondly, Early Muslims from Outside the Prophet's (PBBUH) Household

Abu Bakr Al-Siddiq

Abu Bakr ibn Abu Quhafah (RA) was a dear friend of Prophet Muhammad (PBBUH) and was extremely beloved and esteemed by his people. He was the most knowledgeable person in the field of tracing lineage and family trees, and

was recognized as a gentlemanly, well-mannered merchant. The Prophet (PBBUH) found comfort in his companionship, and saw in him honesty, integrity, and truthfulness. He was the first person outside the Prophet's (PBBUH) family that he invited to worship Allah (Glorified be He) alone and renounce idolatry.

Abu Bakr (RA) did not hesitate for an instant in responding to the Prophet's (PBBUH) call and believing in it. About his prompt acceptance of Islam, the Prophet (PBBUH) later said, **“Everyone I offered Islam to halted and hesitated, except Abu Bakr.”**¹ May Allah be pleased with him. He was the first man to accept Islam.

Men Entering Islam Through Abu Bakr

Because of Abu Bakr's exceptional noble personality, the Qurayshi men used to frequently visit him to enjoy his company and conversation. He began inviting the persons whom he trusted and expected would respond favorably to the idea of joining Islam.

The people who entered Islam through Abu Bakr encompassed an array of glorious names who had a long history and a significant role in the spread of the message of Islam, such as: `Uthman ibn `Affan, Talhah ibn `Ubaidullah, Sa`d ibn Abu Waqqas, and `Abdul-Rahman ibn `Awf (may Allah be pleased with them all).

Abu Bakr (RA) used to personally take any new Muslim to the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) so they could embrace Islam in his presence.

Early Muslims from the Notables of the Quraysh

The early groups were followed by other notable members of the Qurayshi community, including Abu `Ubaidah ibn Al-Jarrah, Abu Salamah ibn `Abdul-

¹ Al-Bidayah wan-Nihayah by Ibn Kathir.

Asad and his wife Umm Salamah, Al-Arqam ibn Abu Al-Arqam, `Uthamn ibn Madh`un, `Ubaydah ibn Al-Harith, Sa`id ibn Zaid and his wife Fatimah bint Al-Khattab (the sister of `Umar ibn Al-Khattab), and others. May Allah be pleased with them all.

Early Muslims from the Poor of the Quraysh

The call to Allah (the Most High) did not stop at the dignitaries, but also included the poor and the slaves, and all the weak, distressed, and deprived sections of society. Prominent among this category were Bilal ibn Rabah, Yassir and his son `Ammar, Suhaib Al-Rumi, and `Amir ibn Fuhairah, Abu Bakr's freed slave. And prominent among the females were Barakah (with the nickname Umm Ayman), Sumayyah (Umm `Ammar), and several other women. May Allah be pleased with them all.

Early Muslims from Outside the Quraysh

The call to Islam extended outside the Quraysh, and several non-Qurayshi Arabs entered Islam, such as `Abdullah ibn Mas`ud Al-Huzali, Mas`ud ibn Rabi`ah Al-Qari, `Abdullah ibn Jahsh Al-Asady, Abu Dhar Al-Ghifari, and others.

The call to Islam continued to spread slowly but successfully, and it quickly became the main topic of conversation in the region, although most Makkans showed little interest in joining it. They thought that the words Prophet Mohammed (PBBUH) brought were no different from those of monks and wise men, such as Waraqah ibn Nawfal and the like. And they had no doubt that people would cling to the religion of their fathers and ancestors.

Muslims Practicing Their Religious Rites in Secret

1. When prayer time came, the Muslims went to a discreet mountain pass where they could offer prayer unseen by their people. Abu Talib was reported to have seen the Prophet (PBBUH) and `Ali (RA) praying together. He

approached `Ali and asked him about the religion he was practicing, and he replied, “O father, I believe in Allah and His Messenger. I have accepted the truth of the message he has brought (from Allah), and I pray to Allah with him.” Abu Talib said, “He calls you to nothing but good, so adhere to him.” (History of Al-Tabari)

2. The Prophet (PBBUH) wisely saw that all Muslims should meet regularly at one specific place where he could teach them the fundamentals of the Islamic faith away from onlookers. The Prophet (PBBUH) chose a house near Al-Safa Mountain for this purpose, which was the house of Al-Arqam ibn Al-Arqam.

Openly Calling to Islam

After three years of secret calling to Islam, Allah’s Order came down to openly preach Islam. Mutual fraternity, cooperation, and collective responsibility for delivering the message of faith were at the core of any group of believers. Therefore, Allah’s Command was given to proclaim the message of Islam to people.

First: Calling the Closest Kindred

In the beginning, Allah (Exalted be He) ordered His Messenger (PBBUH) to invite his relatives and own clan to Islam, saying, “*And warn your tribe (O Muhammad) of near kindred.*” (Al-Shur`ara’ 26:214)

The Prophet (PBBUH) complied with Allah’s Directive and invited his entire clan of Banu Hashim, about forty-five individuals, for a meal, following which he began to talk to them, calling them to Allah’s Religion. While the Prophet (PBBUH) was busy introducing Islam to them, his uncle Abu-Lahab interrupted him viciously, and persuaded everyone present to leave the gathering.

However, the Prophet (PBBUH) persevered and invited them for a second meal. After everyone had finished eating, he (PBBUH) began addressing the

people. He thanked Allah (the Most Exalted) and declared that none is divine or worthy of worship except Him, then said:

“Verily, *Al-Ra'id* (one who goes ahead in search of grass and rainfall areas) cannot lie to his people. By Allah, other than Whom there is no god, I am the Messenger of Allah to you specifically and to all people generally. By Allah, you will die just as you sleep, and you will be resurrected just as you wake up, and you will be held to account for your actions. Truly, it is then Paradise forever or Hellfire forever.”¹

Abu-Lahab objected, and interrupted for a second time, saying, “This, by Allah, is a disgrace! You must stop him before others (outsiders) do.” Abu Talib responded, saying, “By Allah, we shall protect him as long as we are alive.”

At this, `Ali (son of Abu Talib) rose up and, despite being a young boy at the time, said, “O Messenger of Allah, I will be your helper. I will fight against whom you fight.” `Ali’s words were met with smiles of derision and bursts of laughter from the rest of Banu Hisham, while their looks and glances passed to and fro from Abu Talib to his son `Ali.

Second: Calling Everybody to Islam

Allah’s Command came down to the Prophet (PBBUH) to openly invite all people to Islam, with the Qur’anic words: “(O Prophet), **proclaim what you are commanded to, and turn away from those who associate others with Allah in His Divinity.**” (Al-Hijr 15:94)

In obedience, the Prophet (PBBUH) ascended Al-Safa Mountain and started loudly calling on the various branches of the Quraysh, clan by clan, “**O Banu Fihri! O Banu `Adi! O Banu `Abd Manaf! O Banu `Abdul-Muttalib...**” When they heard him, they came, asking what the matter was. He (PBBUH) said, “**If I**

¹ Al-Raheeq Al-Makhtum by Safi-ur-Rahman al-Mubarkpuri.

were to tell you that there were some horsemen in the valley planning to raid you, would you believe me?”

They said, “Yes indeed, we have never known you to tell a lie.”

He (PBBUH) said, “**I am a warner to you before a severe torment.**”

Then the Prophet (PBBUH) began calling on each individual tribe again, “**O Banu Ka`b ibn Lu`ay! Rescue yourselves from the Fire. O Banu Murrah ibn Ka`b! Rescue yourselves from the Fire. O Banu `Abdu Shams! Rescue yourselves from the Fire. O Banu `Abd Manaf! Rescue yourselves from the Fire. O Banu Hashim! Rescue yourselves from the Fire. O Banu `Abdul-Muttalib! Rescue yourselves from the Fire... truly, I can avail you nothing against Allah.**” (Narrated by Al-Bukhari)

Abu Lahab’s Malicious Reaction to the Prophet (PBBUH)

After receiving the Prophet’s (PBBUH) warning, people dispersed with no significant reaction. The exception was Abu Lahab, who got up and confronted the Prophet (PBBUH) in an aggressive manner, saying to him, “Damn you for the rest of the day! Is this why you gathered us together?”

The Prophet (PBBUH), whom Allah (Exalted be He) had refined into a man of perfect virtue, would not return evil with evil, especially as the insult came from a relative whom he placed in a status equivalent to that of a father. He (PBBUH) kept the hurt to himself, despite the enormous pain it caused him to receive such an insult from one of the people closest to him – his uncle.

Allah Responds to the Insult on Behalf of the Prophet (PBBUH)

Abu Lahab returned home and told his wife, Umm Jamil, of the public proclamation made by Prophet Muhammad (PBBUH) [about the worship of the One True Lord]. Without hesitation, she supported her husband in his rejection

of the Prophet's (PBBUH) call to believe in Allah alone. She went further to announce that she was going to sell her precious gold necklace and use the money to plot and plan against the Prophet (PBBUH) to stop him from spreading his call to Islam.

The situation brought an immediate divine response in defense of Prophet Muhammad (PBBUH): “Perish the two hands of Abu Lahab and perish he! Neither his wealth nor his gains will benefit him. He will be cast into a flaming fire, and so will his wife, the carrier of firewood (slandorous tales). Around her neck will be a rope of palm-fiber.” (Al-Massad 111:1-5)

In return for Abu Lahab cursing the Prophet (PBBUH) once, Almighty Allah cursed him in His Eternal Qur'an, which will be recited across the earth, from east to west, day and night without break until Judgment Day. Allah (Exalted be He) has decreed that he and his wife should be put under a permanent curse in this worldly life, let alone the graver punishment awaiting them in the Hereafter.

Following this incident, the Prophet (PBBUH) began to openly call people to Islam in the congregations and gatherings of the disbelievers. The call to Islam began to gather momentum and more and more people began to openly embrace Allah's Religion. Not a day passed without someone new embracing Islam. Such was the natural appeal of the true religion.

The growing number of Muslims was of increasing concern for the Quraysh, who started losing authority in Makkah to this new religion, and they began planning and scheming to fight the spread of Islam.

Worries Overwhelming the Chiefs of the Quraysh

It was only a matter of days after the public announcement of the call to Islam that the new Hajj season would begin. The Quraysh perceived the extent of the danger which the Prophet's (PBBUH) call presented. All the Arab tribes from outside Makkah who came to perform the pilgrimage would be an

audience and potential new followers of Islam. This would lead to less power, authority, prestige, and attention for the Quraysh and their elite, who benefited immensely (financially and socially) from idol worship.

The leaders of the Quraysh called an emergency meeting before Hajj to discuss the best strategy that could put an end to the threat of Islam. Their action demonstrated their lack of logical arguments to defend their system of beliefs and their apprehension of the advance of Islam.

They hurried to consult a highly influential figure in Makkah, Al-Walid ibn Al-Mughirah. He was the perfect candidate to lead this onslaught against the Prophet of Islam (PBBUH), since he had his own personal motives for attacking Prophet Muhammad (PBBUH). He saw himself more deserving of prophethood, and his jealousy and malice worked as the trigger for fighting the Prophet (PBBUH) and resisting the spread of Islam.

To this end, a group of Qurayshi leaders convened with Al-Walid, who said to them, “Agree on one opinion regarding him (Muhammad, PBBUH) and do not differ. Let not your statements contradict or refute each other.”

They said, “We will say that he is a soothsayer,” to which Al-Walid replied, “No, by Allah, he is not a soothsayer. He neither mutters nor speaks in rhyme like one.”

They said, “We will say that he is a madman,” to which he replied, “He is not a madman. We have seen madness and can recognize its signs.”

They said, “We will say that he is a poet (referring to the words of the Qur’an).” He replied, “He is not a poet. We are familiar with all forms of poetry, and surely it (the Qur’an) is not poetry.”

They said, “We shall say he is a sorcerer (i.e., casting spells upon people to join his religion).” Al-Walid again disagreed and said, “He is not a sorcerer. We have seen sorcerers and their sorcery.”

They finally said to him, “Tell us your opinion, which no one can argue against.” Al-Walid asked for some time to deliberate, and he came back to them with the response, “The nearest thing you can say against Muhammad is that he comes with words of magical enchantment, which separates a person from his father, his brother, his spouse, and his clan.”

After this incident, a divine revelation descended concerning Al-Walid, in which Allah (Glorified be He) delineated every step of his actions and thought process until he came up with this decision: “Verily, he thought and plotted. So let him be cursed! How he plotted! And once more, let him be cursed! How he plotted! Then he thought. Then he frowned and scowled. Then he turned back and was proud. Then he said, ‘This (Qur’an) is nothing but magic imitated from the ancients. This is nothing but the words of a human being!’” (Al-Muddathir 74:18-25)

After settling on this decision, they began to implement it. During the Hajj season, they began to actively warn and scare people away from the Prophet (PBBUH) and the enchanting effect that his words had on those who listened to him.

The Prophet (PBBUH), on the other hand, was carrying out his call to Islam with his whole heart and soul, inviting people and explaining Allah’s Religion openly. His uncle, Abu Lahab, continued his relentless attempts to disperse people away from his nephew, following him wherever he (PBBUH) went and repeating, “This is my brother’s son! Do not listen to him. He is a lying renegade.”

When the Hajj season ended, the pilgrims departed Makkah and spread the story of the Prophet’s (PBBUH) heavenly mission to their homelands. His message of Allah’s Oneness became something that was talked about throughout the Arabian Peninsula.

The Struggle Between Truth and Evil

The Quraysh launched a fresh offensive with the aim of halting the advance and spread of Islam in its infancy. Their plot encompassed six different courses of action:

1. Ridiculing and scorning everything the Prophet (PBBUH) said and did.
2. Spreading rumors and false information about the Prophet (PBBUH).
3. Preventing people from listening to the Noble Qur'an.
4. Harming the followers of the Prophet (PBBUH).
5. Offering incentives and compromises to the Prophet (PBBUH) to cause him to either relinquish Islam or follow a middle path.
6. Persecuting the Prophet (PBBUH) through both physical and psychological assault.

Their strategy escalated from one stage to the next according to how the situation developed. The Prophet (PBBUH) responded in a well-planned, practical manner, focusing on two aspects:

1. Spreading the message of Islam and varying the means of communicating it to the people.
2. Protecting his followers from the harm inflicted upon them.

These are the broad outlines of events; now let us zoom in to examine the struggle in more detail.

Firstly: The Quraysh's Scheme to Destroy the Call to Islam

1. Ridiculing and Belittling Everything the Prophet (PBBUH) Said and Did

The disbelievers constantly ridiculed the Prophet (PBBUH) and accused him of mental illness, and sometimes of sorcery. Their aim was to defeat the Muslims and weaken their morale and momentum. Whenever the Prophet (PBBUH) sat with his poor, simple companions, they ridiculed him for only attracting the weak and needy and not the wealthy and powerful of the clan. The Qur'an narrates some instances of their mocking behavior in more detail:

“Indeed, those who committed crimes used to laugh at those who believed. And when they passed by them, they would exchange derisive glances. And when they returned to their people, they would return jesting. And when they saw them, they would say, ‘Indeed, these have gone astray.’ But they (disbelievers, sinners) had not been sent as watchers over them (the believers).” (Al-Mutaffifin 83:29-33)

The ongoing ridicule and derision grew day by day. It undoubtedly had a negative impact on the Prophet (PBBUH), but Allah (the Most Exalted) gave him and his followers strength and patience, as the Noble Qur'an relates: “Surely We are sufficient for you against the mockers, who set up other gods with Allah. They will soon come to know. And indeed, We (Allah) know that your breast is straitened by what they say. So glorify the praises of your Lord and be of those who prostrate themselves (to Him). And worship your Lord until there comes to you the certainty (i.e., death).” (Al-Hijr 15:95-99)

“We (Allah) know indeed the grief which their words cause you (O Muhammad); it is not you that they deny, but it is Allah's Ayat (Revelations or Signs) that the wrongdoers deny.” (Al-An'am 6:33)

2. Spreading Suspicions and Rumors about the Prophet (PBBUH)

The disbelievers intensified their propaganda war against Messenger Muhammad (PBBUH), using various tactics to allow no room for the people to reflect on the message he brought. They circulated among the public that the revelations sent down to the Prophet (PBBUH) were no more than “...mixed-up false dreams!” (Al-Anbiya’ 21:5) claiming that he woke up each morning and narrated to the people the dreams he had at night.

They accused the Prophet (PBBUH) of fabricating the revelation he received; “...rather, he has invented it.” (Al-Anbiya’ 21:5) They then spread the lie that the Prophet (PBBUH) was not divinely inspired: “It is only a human being who teaches him,” (Al-Nahl 16:103) and further claimed that: “This Qur’an is nothing but a fabrication which he made up with the help of others.” (Al-Furqan 25:4)

Another of their allegations was that the Prophet (PBBUH) was suffering from a certain type of madness that made him imagine some meanings, which he then articulated in such beautiful and expressive words, just as poets did. Here, came Allah’s Answer in refutation: “As for the poets, they are followed by people who err. See you not that they speak about every subject (praising the right or wrong of others) in their poetry? And that they say what they do not do.” (Al-Shu`ara’ 26:224-226) None of these three faults attached to poets, as stated in the previous Qur’anic verse, applied to the honorable Prophet (PBBUH).

For the most part, the misconceptions the disbelievers raised against Islam were aimed at Allah’s Oneness and the resurrection of the dead for Judgment Day. The Noble Qur’an responded to each of their false allegations and demonstrated the total powerlessness and futility of their idols.

But although Allah’s Responses given in the Qur’an were powerful, irrefutable, and convincing to any sound-minded person, the disbelievers acted with extreme arrogance, shutting their ears and eyes to the truth. All they wanted

was superiority in this world, and so they abandoned themselves to their own evil transgressions and continued to blindly wander on.

3. Distracting people from listening to Allah's Words

In addition to the sundry rumors they were circulating about the Prophet (PBBUH), they used to hinder people from listening to the Qur'an and the teachings of Islam in every possible way. They used to chase people away from the gatherings of the Prophet (PBBUH) and create a lot of noise and chaos around him while he was preaching or reciting.

They would sing, play, laugh, and shout whenever they saw him preparing himself to invite people to enter into Allah's Religion, so that nobody could hear him. Allah (Glorified be He) describes their impudent distracting behavior, saying:

“And those who disbelieve say, ‘Do not listen to this Qur'an, and speak noisily during (the recitation of) it that perhaps you will overcome.’” (Fussilat 41:26)

4. Persecuting the Prophet's (PBBUH) Companions

The disbelievers persisted in their aggressive and disruptive tactics to thwart the call to Allah's Religion from its very inception, but their efforts proved ineffective. Islam was gaining new followers every day, and so they decided to step up their opposition and use physical violence against the Muslims to force them to abandon their religion.

This calls for a reflective pause. Modern psychological research has shown that when one party fails to intellectually convince the other party on the basis of solid evidence and sound logic, and the argument turns from a rational debate to fighting and use of force, this indicates the weakness and lack of resourcefulness of the aggressing party. It is also an outward sign of profound

inward fear. The greater their abuse and harm, the greater is their terror from the other party who uses nothing but facts, reason, and logic.

This was exactly the state of the *Mushrikin* (those who associate others with Allah in His Divinity or worship) at the time. Their fear and anxiety about what the Muslims brought caused them to respond with violence and harm.

Instances of the Persecution Inflicted by the Quraysh upon the Muslims

Early Muslims were of two categories:

1. Some came from large chief families of the Quraysh, such as Abu Bakr, `Uthman ibn `Afan, and Sa`d ibn Abi Waqas (RA).
2. The others were usually oppressed, poor, or enslaved, such as Bilal ibn Rabah and `Ammar ibn Yasir (RA).

The abuse and harm that the Quraysh meted out upon the Muslims varied according to the social position of the person. Those who belonged to a noble and wealthy background were subjected to financial and emotional harassment by turning their families and acquaintances against them and inciting a boycott of their business. As for the slaves, persecution was practiced on them by their masters. Following are some examples of the trials to which the Companions of Prophet Muhammad (PBBUH) were subjected:

Abu Bakr Al-Siddiq and Talhah ibn `Ubaidullah

They both belonged to the sub-clan of Taym. They were bound together with one rope and tortured by Nawfal ibn Khuwaylid, who was one of the principle men of the Quraysh (his nickname was the 'Lion of the Quraysh'). He was well known for his physical strength and hostility towards to the Muslims. By tightly tying them, he wanted to prevent them from prayer and practicing their religion,

and thus Abu Bakr and Talhah came to be called ‘Al-Qarinayn’ (the Two Tied Together).

Uthman ibn Affan

When his paternal uncle, Al-Hakam ibn Abi Al-`As, found out he had embraced Islam, he tied him up in an attempt to force him to relinquish his faith. He intimidated him, saying, “Have you renounced the religion of your forefathers for a new religion? By Allah, I shall not untie you until you abandon it.” Uthman replied, “By Allah, I shall not abandon it or part myself from it.” In the face of Uthman’s resolute firmness in adhering to the truth, Al-Hakam let him go.

Sa`d ibn Abu Waqqas

His mother was very upset at learning that he had become Muslim and threatened him, saying, “Either you forsake this religion or I will not eat or drink until I die, and people will forever condemn you on account of me.” Sa`d, as a caring son who loved his mother dearly, went to the Prophet (PBBUH) to consult his advice, and as a consequence Allah (the Clement) revealed this Qur’anic verse: “We have enjoined upon man goodness to parents. But if they strive to make you associate with Me that of which you have no knowledge, do not obey them. To Me is your return, and then I will inform you of what you used to do.” (Al-`Ankabut 29:8)

Sa`d went back to his mother after he heard this Qur’anic revelation and said to her, “O my mother, you know, by Allah if you had one hundred souls and they were to depart one after the other, I would not give up this religion of mine for anything. So eat if you wish, and do not eat if you wish.” Prevailed upon to eat by her son’s unshakable determination, she left him to his religion.

This was a glimpse of the persecution that the upper-class Muslims of the Quraysh had to face. As for the poor and oppressed members of the Makkan

society, the disbelievers of the Quraysh unleashed their tyranny against them without restraint, particularly the slaves, whether males or females.

Bilal ibn Rabah

He was the slave of Umayyah ibn Khalaf, who, after getting the news of Bilal's adoption of Islam, would tie a rope around his neck and hand him over to the boys to drag him across the mountain passes and roads of Makkah until the rope left severe marks on Bilal's neck. Umayyah would also take Bilal outside in the scorching midday sun and throw him on his back on the burning desert sand with a heavy rock laid on his chest. Then he would say to him, "You will remain like this until you die or disbelieve in Muhammad." The only answer Bilal (RA) gave were the words, "One and Only (God)!" These short yet powerful words provoked the disbelievers tremendously because they were a direct assault on their polytheism (belief in several gods). However, Bilal's suffering did not last forever. Abu Bakr (RA) passed by Bilal while he was being tortured and bought him from Ummayah and manumitted him.

`Ammar ibn Yassir

He was a slave of Banu Makhzum. He became a Muslim along with his father and mother. The disbelievers, led by Abu Jahl, used to take them out to a rocky flatland when the sun was scorching hot and make them lie down on the burning sand, where they would torture them in the unbearable heat. The Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) walked by them while they were being tortured and consoled them with the words, "**Patience, O family of Yassir, for your (final) destination is Paradise.**" Yassir, the father, died during torture, and Summayah, the mother, was stabbed to death with a spear by Abu Jahl after she refused to give up Islam. She thus became the first martyr of Islam.

Many further examples lie beyond the scope of this book to cover. But reflecting on these early Muslims, we pause in admiration at the depth of their belief and the loftiness of their souls that gave them the strength to endure such

levels of torture and humiliation. Difficult sacrifices became easy for them for the sake of adhering to the truth and the right path. Something which left the disbelievers in complete bewilderment.

5. The Quraysh Negotiating with the Prophet (PBBUH) to Induce Him to Abandon His Message

All methods of persecution used by the Quraysh on the followers of Muhammad (PBBUH) failed, and the number of believers increased day by day. The Quraysh were becoming increasingly concerned, especially as the Prophet (PBBUH) was under the protection of his uncle, Abu Talib, and the clan of Banu Hashim. The Quraysh decided to adopt a different strategy of incentives and peace negotiations.

Following are some of the concessions and maneuvers that the Quraysh employed in an attempt to contain and restrict the Prophet's (PBBUH) call to Islam.

a- `Utbah ibn Rabi`ah Going as the Quraysh's Envoy to the Prophet (PBBUH)

`Utbah (the father of Abu Sufyan's wife, Hind and `Utbah) was one of the Makkan leaders, and he put himself forward as an envoy to Muhammad (PBBUH) on behalf of the Quraysh. He said to the Prophet (PBBUH), "O nephew, you know the status you hold among us by virtue of your family's position of high honor and lineage, but you have brought a matter of grave concern to your people through which you have split their community, belittled their mentality, censured their deities and religion, and declared their forefathers disbelievers. Now, listen to me. I will make some proposals for you to examine; perhaps you will accept one of them."

The Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) said, "**Speak, O Abul-Walid. I will listen.**"

Utbah went on to say, “O my nephew, if, through what you have come with, all that you desire is wealth, we will gather for you from our wealth until you become the richest man among us. If all that you desire is eminence, we will make you our leader, after which we will make no decision without your approval. If all that you desire is kingship, we will make you our king. And if the one who comes to you (i.e., Angel Jibril) is nothing more than an apparition that you are not able to ward off, we will seek out the best medicine and spend as much of our wealth as is necessary to cure you.”

The Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) said, “**Have you finished, O Abul-Walid?**” `Utbah replied, “Yes.” The Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) said, “**Now listen to me.**” `Utbah replied, “I will.” He (PBBUH) proceeded to recite the first verses of the Qur’anic Chapter of Fussilat (Explained in Detail): “**In the Name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful: Ha-Mim¹. (This is) a Revelation from the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful. A Book whose verses are perfectly explained. A Qur’an in Arabic for people who know. Delivering good news and warning. Yet most of them turn away, so they do not hear.**” (Fussilat 41:1-4)

`Utbah listened attentively throughout the recitation of these verses until the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) reached the verse: “**But if they turn away, then say (O Muhammad), ‘I have warned you of a thunderbolt like that which struck `Ad and Thamud (past communities destroyed by divine retribution).’**” (Fussilat 41:13) After hearing this, `Utbah stood up, panicked. He placed his hand on the Prophet’s (PBBUH) mouth and requested him, “I beg you in Allah’s Name and the ties of kinship to stop (fearing that the same punishment could befall the Quraysh).” He then left, hurrying back to his people.

When `Utbah returned to his fellows, they noticed that his expression had completely altered, and so they asked him, “What happened, O Abul-Walid?” He said, “I heard words the like of which, by Allah, I have never heard before. By Allah, it is neither poetry, nor magic, nor soothsaying. O people of the Quraysh!

¹ These letters are one of the miracles of the Qur’an, and none but Allah Alone knows their meanings.

Listen to me and take my advice. Leave this man alone and do not stand in his way. Keep aloof. If (other) Arabs kill him, you will be rid of him at the hands of others. And if he defeats the Arabs, his sovereignty will be your sovereignty, his honor will be your honor, and you will be the most fortunate of people through him.”

But their answer was, “By Allah, he has bewitched you with his tongue, O Abul-Walid.”

b- The Quraysh’s Negotiating Delegation to Abu Talib

Abu Talib announced his protection of the Prophet (PBBUH) and his insistence on standing in his defense in the event of any violations against him. Some notables from the Quraysh came as a delegation to Abu Talib to try and prevail upon him to withdraw his protection. They addressed him with these words, “O Abu Talib, your nephew has reviled our gods, denounced our religion, ridiculed our mentality, and accused our forefathers of being astray. Now either you stop him or else give us a free hand with him, for you follow what we follow.”

However, Abu Talib talked gently to them and politely dismissed them. And so the Prophet (PBBUH) continued to publicly preach and call people to worship the One True God.

c- The Quraysh Threatening Abu Talib

Not long had passed since the meeting with Abu Talib, but the Quraysh could not bear to watch the Prophet (PBBUH) carrying on with his message, so they decided to escalate the offensive against Abu Talib. For a second time, some leaders of the Quraysh went and spoke with Abu Talib, saying, “O Abu Talib, you are an honorable elder among us. We have asked you to stop your nephew, but you have not. By Allah, we will not stand by and accept that our forefathers

be insulted, our mentality be ridiculed, and our gods be maligned. Either you stop him or we will fight against him and you until one of the two sides (of our conflict with Islam) is destroyed.”

Realizing the severity of the situation, Abu Talib sent for the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) and said to him, “O my nephew, your people came to me and said such-and-such...,” and he told him what they had said. He then pleaded with him, “So spare me and yourself, and do not place upon me a burden I cannot bear.”

“Even If They Put the Sun in My Right Hand and the Moon in My Left Hand”

The Prophet (PBBUH) sensed a weakness and an intention of withdrawal of support in his uncle’s words due to the ongoing pressures on him from the Quraysh. Yet he (PBBUH) responded with fortitude and firmness of purpose, and said his famous words, **“O my uncle, by Allah, even if they put the sun in my right hand, and the moon in my left hand in return for giving up this matter (calling people to Islam), I will never stop until either Allah makes it (His Religion) triumph or I die defending it.”**

The Prophet (PBBUH) was undaunted by the threats of the Quraysh or the prospect of his uncle deserting him. He (PBBUH) got up with teary eyes but, as he turned to leave, his uncle called him back and said, “Go and preach what you please, for by Allah I will never forsake you.”

Abu Talib, filled with pride at the steadfastness and bravery of his nephew, recited two poetic lines to express his full support:

By Allah, never will they reach you with all their multitudes until I am laid in the earth, buried.

Proclaim openly your message and never mind anything. Rejoice and let it delight your heart.

d- Another Attempt by the Quraysh to Cut Off the Support of Abu Talib

The Quraysh were left in a state of vexation and disappointment as they saw Muhammad (PBBUH) going ahead with his message and his uncle refusing to forsake him. Yet they went to Abu Talib one more time, taking with them a youth called `Ammarah ibn Al-Walid ibn Al-Mughirah. He was described as the handsomest and strongest youth in all of the Quraysh.

They said to Abu Talib, “Take `Ammarah as your own son, and you will have the benefit of his intelligence and support. In return, surrender to us your nephew (Muhammad), who has opposed your religion and the religion of your fathers, divided your people, and belittled their minds, so that we can kill him. In the end, it is nothing more than a man for a man.”

Abu Talib got up disapprovingly and replied in anger, “By Allah, this is really an evil bargain which you offer me. You will give me your son for me to feed for you, and I will give you my son so that you may kill him. By Allah, this will never be.” And so the men of the Quraysh left dissatisfied.

When Abu Talib felt that the Quraysh was rallying and banding against him and his nephew, he called upon Banu Hashim (his immediate clan) and asked them to pledge their support for his nephew (PBBUH). The whole of Banu Hashim promised Abu Talib that they would support Muhammad (PBBUH), even if they were not of the same religion. Only one person refused, and that was Abu Lahab (Abu Talib’s brother and the Prophet's (PBBUH) paternal uncle).

6. Bodily Assault on the Prophet (PBBUH)

None of the strategies employed by the *Mushrikin* worked, so, in despair of ever being able to stop the Prophet (PBUH), they resorted to physical abuse. The Prophet (PBBUH) faced much harm from the *Mushrikin*. The worst of it was at the hands of the Mockers (five Qurayshi men who were the vilest in their

mockery and abuse), especially when the Prophet (PBBUH) went to pray at the Ka`bah. A few instances of the harm they inflicted on the Prophet (PBBUH) are given here:

a- Abu Lahab and his wife Umm Jamil

Before the Prophet (PBBUH) was commissioned with the message of Islam, Abu Lahab's two sons, `Utbah and `Utaybah, were married to the Prophet's (PBBUH) two daughters, Ruqqayah and Umm Kulthum. After the Prophet (PBBUH) began spreading the word of Islam, Abu Lahab was adamant that his sons must divorce the Prophet's (PBBUH) daughters. His intention was to hurt the Prophet (PBBUH). Both sons complied with their father's order and divorced their wives.

During the Hajj season, Abu Lahab used to campaign against the Prophet (PBBUH) and pursue him, wherever he might be, to contradict what he was saying and chase people away from him. He did not only stop at that, but often threw rocks and stones at him, causing his feet to bleed.

His wife, Umm Jamil, showed no less hatred for the Prophet (PBBUH). She was the worst neighbor imaginable, often placing thorns in his pathway and putting rubbish on his doorstep at night.

Upon learning of the Qur'anic revelation that came down concerning her, in which she was described as the "Carrier of Firewood," she angrily came to the Prophet (PBBUH) while he was sitting with Abu Bakr near the Ka`bah. She had a large stone in her hand which she intended to throw at the Prophet (PBBUH).

When she got close to them, she asked, "O Abu Bakr, where is your companion? I have been told that he is satirizing me. By Allah, if I had found him, I would have struck his mouth with this stone." She then went away. Abu Bakr turned to the Prophet (PBBUH) and exclaimed, "O Messenger of Allah, did

she not see you?” The Prophet (PBBUH) answered, “**She did not see me. Allah took away her ability to see me.**”

b- `Uqbah ibn Abu Mu`ait

He was another neighbor of the Prophet (PBBUH) whose treatment of him was just as callous as that of Abu Lahab. One of the most abhorrent acts he committed one day was waiting until the Prophet (PBBUH) prostrated himself while praying by the Ka`bah. He then placed the dung, blood, and entrails of a slaughtered camel on the Prophet’s (PBBUH) back, causing the disbelievers present to roar with laughter.

The Prophet (PBBUH) did not move, but stayed in the prostration posture until his daughter, Fatimah, hurried over to him and removed the filth from his back.

c- Abu Jahl (`Amr ibn Hisham)

He was the most hostile man among these Five Mockers. He used to throw rubbish on the Prophet (PBBUH) when he was praying, and constantly tried to prevent him from praying in the sanctuary of the Ka`bah. After all his attempts failed, he decided to escalate his attack. He said to his friends, “By Allah, I shall sit (here) tomorrow carrying an unbearably heavy rock, and once he prostrates while praying, I shall smash his head with it. And let the tribe of `Abd Manaf do with me as they please. I, too, have my kindred and supporters to protect me.”

The next day, Abu Jahl came carrying the rock as he had said he would. However, when he was about to throw it at the Prophet (PBBUH), who was in prostration, he began retreating in fear, his face pale with terror, his hands shaking. He dropped the rock on the ground. Some men from the Quraysh who were waiting to see what he would do to him, asked, “What is wrong with you, O Abul-Hakam?” He replied, “I was going to do what I had said, but when I

approached him, a male camel appeared before me. I swear by Allah, the like of it I have never seen before. It was about to devour me. Truly, between me and him there was a ditch of fire, terror, and wings (of angels).”

The Prophet (PBBUH) was asked about this incident and replied, **“That was Jibril and the angels. Had he (Abu Jahl) stepped nearer to me, the angels would have ripped him apart.”**

As a consequence, the following Qur’anic verses threatening Abu Jahl were revealed: *“Have you seen him who forbids a servant (Muhammad) when he prays? Have you seen if he is upon guidance or enjoins righteousness? Have you seen if he denies and turns away? Does he not know that Allah sees? Nay! If he (Abu Jahl) ceases not, We (Allah) will drag him by the forelock. A lying, sinful forelock. Then let him call upon his council (of helpers). We will call out the guards of Hell. Nay! Do not obey him. Fall prostrate and draw near (to Allah).”* (Al-`Alaq 96:9-19)

d- Attempt to Strangle the Prophet (PBBUH)

The worst thing that happened to the Prophet (PBBUH) was getting encircled by the pagans in a menacing manner while he was praying in the courtyard of the Ka`bah. They started saying to him, “Are you the one who says such and such?” repeating what they had heard of his denunciation of their gods and their religion.

Then, `Uqbah ibn Abi Mu`ait wrapped his garment around the Prophet’s (PBBUH) neck and twisted it hard in an attempt to strangle the Prophet (PBBUH) to death. Abu Bakr stepped in and pushed him away from the Prophet (PBBUH), saying, *“Will you kill a man because he says, ‘My Lord is Allah,’ and he has come to you with clear signs (proof) from your Lord?”* (Ghafir 40:28)

These are but a few brief depictions of the persecution and violence carried out against the Prophet (PBBUH) and the early Muslims by the disbelievers.

Secondly: The Prophet's (PBBUH) Plan to Counter the Quraysh's Abuse

Despite the various maneuvers to obstruct the message of Islam, ranging from opposition to negotiation to bodily harm, the Prophet (PBBUH) held fast to his clear path and exact aim, which was to make Allah's Word paramount and supreme on earth. Throughout his various ordeals, the Prophet's (PBBUH) plan remained focused on two main courses of action: communicating the message of Islam and protecting his Companions.

1. Communication of the Message

The Prophet's (PBBUH) character was the driving force of Islam; his attitude and personality attracted people to him, held their attention, and influenced them in the right way. What added depth and beauty to his magnificent character was the divine revelations he received and conveyed to the people.

Dar Al-Arqam (the House of Al-Arqam)

Prudent and careful about the safety of his followers, the Prophet (PBBUH) selected the house of Al-Arqam ibn Abi Al-Arqam as a secure place where he could meet and teach the early Muslims. It was located on Al-Safa mountain, away from the eyes of the Quraysh.

It became the location for secret gatherings of the Muslims with their Prophet (PBBUH), who recited to them Allah's Words, through which he purified their hearts. Then came the process of moral and intellectual instruction by teaching them the laws of the Qur'an and the precepts of Islam. The Prophet's

(PBBUH) choice of this place showed a great deal of insight and wisdom due to several reasons, including:

- Al-Arqam was not known to be a Muslim, and so it was unlikely for the Quraysh to suspect that the Prophet (PBBUH) and his Companions would hold their meetings at his house.
- Al-Arqam was from the clan of Banu-Makhzum, who were one of the fiercest rivals to Banu Hashim and the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH). This again made it almost impossible to expect that such meetings would be conducted in a house situated amid the enemy's own lines.
- Al-Arqam was merely a sixteen-year-old youth. This put his house outside the range of the Quraysh's search for the headquarters of Islam. Rather, their keen eyes always targeted the houses of his prominent followers and close companions, not that of a youth.

With the establishment of Dar Al-Arqam, the Prophet (PBBUH) achieved his objective and provided the first meeting place from which to spread and teach the message of Islam and lay down a solid foundation for the first generation of Muslims. All this was done in secrecy, away from the disbelievers and avoiding confrontation with them.

2. Protection of His Companions

The attacks on Muslims began during the 4th year of prophethood and continued with a significant escalation of aggression towards the end of the year. In the fifth year, the anti-Muslim hostilities reached a climax. For this reason, the Prophet (PBBUH) asked his Companions to do the following in order to secure their protection:

a. Pray in secret

The Prophet (PBBUH) instructed his Companions to hide their Islam and practice their religious duties in secret. And so, they used to pray in the mountain passes away from the constant surveillance of the *Mushrikin*.

b. Emigrate to Abyssinia (Ethiopia)

When the torture and persecution inflicted upon the Muslims intensified, the Prophet (PBBUH) advised the oppressed Muslims to emigrate to a safer place. It was known to the Prophet (PBBUH) that the Negus, the King of Abyssinia, was a fair king under whose rule no one would be oppressed. Therefore, the Prophet (PBBUH) told the early Muslims to flee from the trials and tribulations inflicted on them due to their faith and go to Abyssinia.

The First Emigration to Abyssinia

During the month of Rajab, in the 5th year of prophethood, the first group of Companions began emigrating to Abyssinia. Twelve men and four women, led by `Uthman ibn `Affan and his wife Ruqqayah (the Prophet's PBBUH daughter, whom `Uthman married after her divorce from Abu Lahab's son). They set off during the dark hours of the night to avoid being captured by the Quraysh and headed to the coast towards Shu`aibah, which was Makkah's principal port on the Red Sea at the time. They embarked on two waiting boats and set sail for Abyssinia.

The news of their departure quickly reached the Quraysh and some men were hurriedly dispatched to pursue them and bring them back. Their efforts, however, proved futile, as the boats on which the Muslims fled had long since left the shore and set off towards Abyssinia, where they were kindly received and accommodated.

The emigration strategy enabled the Prophet (PBBUH) to protect his Companions. It also carried a wider strategic objective, which was to spread Allah's Religion to new lands.

Abu Bakr's Attempt at Emigration to Abyssinia

Days and months passed, and the situation only got worse for the early Muslims. Abu Bakr (RA), one of the Prophet's (PBBUH) closest Companions, endured the same afflictions at the hands of the *Mushrikin* as the rest of the Muslims, until Makkah became an unbearable place to live. Abu Bakr then sought permission from the Prophet (PBBUH) to emigrate to Abyssinia and the Prophet (PBBUH) agreed, so Abu Bakr set off to the port of Shu`aibah.

On his way there, Abu Bakr met Ibn Al-Daghinah ibn `Abd Manat, the chief of the Qarah tribe, who asked him, "Where are you going, O Abu Bakr?"

Abu Bakr replied, "My people have forced me out (of my country), harmed me, and made life unbearable for me."

Ibn Al-Daghinah asked, "For what reason? By Allah, you have been such a graceful member of your kinsfolk. You help the calamity-stricken people. You do that which is good and right. And you provide for those in need. Go back, and from now on you shall be under my protection."

So Abu Bakr returned along with him; and when they entered Makkah, Ibn Al-Daghinah announced, "O people of the Quraysh! I have given protection to Ibn Abu Quhafah. No one should approach him except with good (intention)."

Abiding Under Allah's Protection

Abu Bakr had a place for prayer by the doorstep of his house, and because he was an emotional man, any time he recited the Noble Qur'an he would weep. Passers-by stopped and listened to him and were moved by his recitations. This

upset the Quraysh and they conveyed their concerns to Ibn Al-Daghinah. “O Ibn Daghinah, you have not protected this man so that he may trouble us. Whenever he prays and recites what Muhammad has brought, he is deeply moved and weeps. We are afraid lest our children, women, and weak people be led astray by him. Ask him to stay in his house where he can do as he pleases.”

Ibn Al-Daghinah told Abu Bakr that the Quraysh objected to his praying outside his house and wanted him to limit it to the inside of his house. Abu Bakr’s response to this request was unequivocal: “I shall revoke your pledge of protection and be satisfied with Allah’s Protection.” Thus, Abu-Bakr was no longer under the protection of Ibn Al-Daghinah, which again emboldened the foolish to abuse him, but he remained steadfast, committed to Allah (the All-Powerful), enjoying His closeness and protection.

The Return of the Muslim Emigrants from Abyssinia

The Muslims stayed in Abyssinia for three months, after which they began returning to Makkah based on the false news that the Quraysh had all entered Islam, and Muslims were no longer in jeopardy.

Several other reasons accounting for their return have been cited in historical records, some of which have been classed as weak and denounced. In any case, regardless of the reason, when the emigrant Muslims came back to Makkah after three months, they found the situation worse than before. The Quraysh remained ruthless and unrelenting in their aggression, and so they decided to return to Abyssinia.

The Second Migration to Abyssinia

The second emigration was larger in scale than the first, but it was more challenging. The Quraysh were extremely alert, watchful, and determined to quash any emigration attempt, but the Muslims were faster and more cautious, and Allah (the Gracious) facilitated the journey. In the month of Rabi` Al-

Awwal, in the sixth year of prophethood, they managed to successfully complete the journey. This time the group of emigrants comprised eighty-three men and eighteen women, including Ja`far ibn Abu Talib (the son of Abu Talib, the Prophet's (PBBUH) uncle and the brother of `Ali ibn Abu Talib), and his wife, `Asma' bint `Umais.

The Quraysh Conspiring Against the Muslim Emigrants Inside Abyssinia

The Quraysh could not accept that the Muslims had found a haven for themselves and their faith, and so they decided to try to turn the Abyssinian king against them and onto their side. They sent two of their most articulate, influential, and prominent men to Abyssinia as their representatives: `Amr ibn Al-`As and `Abdullah ibn Abu Rabi`ah. They brought generous gifts for the Negus and his patriarchs. They first presented their gifts to the Abyssinian patriarchs and provided arguments for the expulsion of the group of Muslims who sought asylum in their land. The Quraysh's envoys were successful in winning the support of these ministers, who agreed to advise the Negus to consent to the extradition of the Muslims back to Makkah.

The two Qurayshi envoys then went before the Negus, presented their gifts, and spoke thus to him: "O king, some foolish youths have taken refuge in your land. They have abandoned the religion of their people but have not entered your religion (Christianity). They have come up with an invented religion that neither we nor you know about. We have been sent to you, with respect to them, by the dignitaries of their people, from among their fathers, their uncles, and their clans, so that you may return them (these youth) to them. For they know them best and are more knowledgeable of the wrong attributed to them, for which they have already admonished them."

His patriarchs endorsed what they said and advised the king to hand the Muslims over to them.

The Negus Insisting on Hearing the Muslims

Being a fair and just man, the Negus was enraged at the suggestion made by his patriarchs and refused to make a decision without hearing the argument of the other side. He said, "I will not surrender them until I hear what they have to say." He asked for the Muslims to be summoned before him. They were aware of the situation they were in and had already agreed to say nothing but the truth (as conveyed to them by the Prophet PBBUH), regardless of the consequences.

The Negus said, "What is this religion for which you have abandoned your people, and yet have neither adopted my religion nor any of these other (prevalent) creeds?"

Ja`far ibn Abu Talib, the spokesman on behalf of his fellow Muslims, stepped forward and replied, "O king, we were a people living in ignorance. We used to worship idols, eat carrion, commit obscenities, cut off kinship ties, mistreat our neighbors, and the strong among us used to destroy the weak.

We remained in this state until Allah sent us a Messenger from among our own people. We knew his lineage, truthfulness, honesty, and chastity. He called us to Allah, to believe in His Oneness and worship Him alone; and to repudiate the stones and idols that we and our forefathers had been worshipping. He enjoined us to speak the truth, to restore that which is entrusted to us, to maintain the ties of kinship, to be good to our neighbors, and to refrain from forbidden acts and bloodshed. He prohibited us from all acts of immorality, uttering false testimony, appropriating the property of orphans, and slandering chaste women.

He commanded us to worship Allah alone and not to associate anything with Him, and to offer prayer, give charity, and fast. So we affirmed his truthfulness, believed in him, and followed him in whatever he brought from Allah. Because of this, our people turned against us. They tortured us to tempt us away from our religion and revert us back to idol worship. When they subjugated us, oppressed

us, made life intolerable for us, and stood between us and our religion, we came to your country and chose you over all others, desirous to live as your neighbors and hoping, O King, not to be wronged in your land.”

The Negus asked, “Do you have anything that was revealed to him from Allah?”

“Yes,” replied Ja`far, and he started reciting the beginning verses of the Chapter of Mayram (Mary): “Kaf- Ha-Ya-`Ain-Sad¹. (This is) a mention of the mercy of your Lord to His servant Zakariyah (Zachariah). When he called to his Lord a private supplication...” (19:1-3) and he continued until the verse: “Peace be upon him (Yahya) the day he was born, and the day he will die, and the day he will be raised up alive.” (Mayram 19:15)

Ja`far’s choice was shrewd. He chose the story of Zakariyah (PBBUH) and Yahya (John PBBUH), who were both contemporary prophets of `Isa’s time (Jesus PBBUH), to point out the similarity between what the Qur’an and the Torah said concerning them. On hearing these verses of the Qur’an, the Negus wept until his beard was wet with tears, and he said to the Muslims, “This, and what `Isa (Jesus, PBBUH) came with emanate from the same lamp (source).”

Then the Negus said to the Qurayshi envoys, “Go. For, by Allah, I will never surrender them to you.”

One Final Attempt to Get the Emigrants Back

After they were dismissed from the king’s presence and their request denied, `Amr ibn Al-`As said to `Abdullah ibn Rabi`ah, “I swear by Allah that tomorrow I will expose to him something about them by which their group will be uprooted.”

¹ These disjointed Arabic letters at the beginning of certain chapters are one of the miracles of the Qur’an, and none but Allah knows their meanings.

The next day, `Amr returned to the King and said, “O King, they utter grievous words about `Isa (Jesus), the son of Maryam (Mary). Summon them and ask them what they say about him.”

The Negus sent for the Muslims again and asked them, “What do you say about `Isa the son of Maryam?” Ja`far ibn Abu Talib replied, “We say about him what our Prophet (PBBUH) has brought us, that he is Allah’s Servant, His Messenger, a Spirit created by Him and His Word (“Be!” – and he was), which He sent down to Maryam the Virgin, the Chaste.”

The Negus, on hearing these words, picked up a straw from the ground and said, “By Allah, `Isa the son of Maryam is not more than what you have said, not even as much as this straw.”

When the Negus said this, his patriarchs around him snorted in aversion, but he said to them, “Yes, by Allah, even if you snort.”

The Negus then addressed the Muslims, saying, “Go, for you are safe and secure in my land. Whoever insults you will incur loss (penalty). Not for a mountain of gold would I harm a single one of you.”

Turning to `Amr and his companion, the Negus instructed his attendants, “Return their gifts to them. I have no need of them...” Their gifts were handed back to them and the two envoys of the Quraysh left for Makkah, bitterly defeated and humiliated.

The emigrant Muslims continued to reside securely alongside the Negus in a very good and honorable abode, with a very good and honorable neighbor.

Hamzah and `Umar Entering Islam

Highly vexed and frustrated after their failure to extradite the emigrant Muslims, the disbelievers unleashed their ferocious anger on the Muslims who remained in Makkah, subjecting them to harsher punishments and sanctions. The departure of the emigrants (more than a hundred persons) also greatly weakened the numerical strength of the Muslims.

But Allah (the Dependable) compensated for their shortage of numbers with two new Muslims, who became among the greatest Companions and supporters of the Prophet (PBBUH) and enhanced the position of Muslims in Makkah through the strength of their character and their distinguished status among the clans. These two men were Hamzah ibn `Abdul-Muttalib (the Prophet's PBBUH paternal uncle) and `Umar ibn Al-Khattab (RA).

How Hamzah ibn `Abdul-Muttalib Embraced Islam

Hamzah reverted to Islam towards the end of the sixth year of prophethood. His reversion started with one particular incident. One day, as the Prophet (PBBUH) was sitting by Al-Safa Mountain (near the Holy Ka`bah), Abu Jahl walked past him and began to revile him and speak viciously of his religion. The Prophet (PBBUH) maintained his dignified and graceful composure and did not respond or react to him. Then he (PBBUH) walked away.

A slave woman of `Abdullah ibn Jud`an witnessed and heard all the insults and hurtful words that Abu Jahl hurled at the Prophet (PBBUH). On seeing Hamzah coming back from his hunting trip with his bow slung over his shoulder, she said to him, "O Abu `Umarah, you should have seen the treatment meted out to your nephew Muhammad at the hands of Abul-Hakam ibn Hisham (i.e., Abu Jahl)." She told him the details of what had happened. When Hamzah heard this, he was seized with anger. He left at once and hurried to the Ka`bah to circumambulate it, as was his custom after returning from a hunting trip. He

did not stop to speak to anyone on the way but went right to the sanctuary, intending to strike Abu Jahl.

No sooner did Hamzah reach the sanctuary than he saw Abu Jahl seated among his peers. He went over to him and said angrily, “How dare you insult my nephew when I am a follower of his religion!” He hit Abu Jahl with his bow, inflicting a severe wound on his head. Some members of Banu Makhzum (Abu Jahl’s clan) stood up to defend Abu Jahl, and some members of Banu Hashim stood up to support Hamzah. But Abu Jahl sent them away, saying, “Leave Abu `Umarah alone, for, by Allah, I reviled his nephew with heinous curses.”

Eventually, Hamzah’s anger subsided. He sat alone and replayed what had just happened in his mind. He thought about how his zealous protection of his nephew drove him into declaring himself a Muslim and abjuring the religion of his forefathers. He earnestly implored Almighty Allah for guidance, and his request was granted. He felt his heart opening up to Islam. He went to the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) and became a Muslim.

Hamzah was no ordinary youth in the Quraysh. He was one of the most honorable, proud, steadfast, and truthful men in all of Makkah. This made the Quraysh quickly realize that the Prophet (PBBUH) had become more protected and better supported than ever before.

How `Umar ibn Al-Khattab Embraced Islam

`Umar was known for his pride, irascible temper, and tenacity of opinion, which resulted in much pain and suffering for the Muslims. Yet, deep inside, `Umar was very compassionate and tender-hearted – like a fruit that is tough on the outside but delicious and sweet-smelling on the inside.

What touched that deep part inside `Umar (RA) was the separation of Muslims from their homeland and their emigration to Abyssinia. Among the emigrant Muslims were close friends of `Umar, who he was sad to part with.

One day, `Umar (RA) went out to visit a friend who had decided to emigrate. His name was `Amir ibn Rabi`ah. As he approached the house, he only found `Amir's wife, who was packing their belongings in preparation to emigrate. `Umar asked her in a sympathetic voice, "Are you leaving, O Umm `Abdullah?" She replied in a furious tone, "Yes, by Allah, we are going to Allah's Land. You have harmed us and oppressed us. We shall leave here until Allah grants us a way out." `Umar (RA), deeply affected by her words, said, "May Allah be with you." Then he left.

Through her feminine sensitivity, Umm `Abdullah could see kindness and sorrow on `Umar's face. When her husband returned, she told him what had happened and how sympathetic and sad `Umar appeared to be, but her husband replied, "It seems that you hope `Umar will become a Muslim." She replied, "Yes." He said, "By Allah, he will not become a Muslim until Al-Khattab's donkey becomes a Muslim (first)."

`Amir's opinion was based on the hardships that Muslims faced because of `Umar. However, events later unfolded to show that `Amir was mistaken in his judgment, and his wife's female intuition proved to be stronger and more accurate.

`Umar Decides to Kill the Prophet (PBBUH)

The emigrant woman's words made `Umar reflect on the troubled situation that their community was going through because of Muhammad (PBBUH). `Umar believed that if he (PBBUH) was not there, these people would not have left their homes and friends. He then decided to remove the root cause of what he perceived to be the problem: the man whose actions brought dissension to his people. And so he resolved to kill the Prophet (PBBUH).

`Umar put on his sword and headed straight for the Prophet (PBBUH) with the intention of killing him. But, on the way, he was stopped by a friend of his, named Nu`aym ibn `Abdullah, who kept his Islamic faith a secret. When

Nu`aym learned what `Umar was up to, he tried to divert him from his plan by saying, “By Allah, you have deceived yourself, O `Umar. Do you think that Banu `Abd Manaf (the Prophet’s PBBUH immediate clan) would let you walk on the earth after you kill Muhammad! Why do you not return to your own house and set it right first?” `Umar asked, “Which of my family members?” Nu`aym replied, “Your sister Fatimah and your paternal cousin and brother-in-law Sa`id ibn Zaid. They have both accepted Islam and are following Muhammad’s religion.”

Enraged, `Umar (RA) went directly to his sister’s house. Khabab ibn Al-Arat was with them at the time, teaching them some verses of Ta-ha Chapter from a scroll. As `Umar (RA) drew near the house, he heard Khabab’s recitation and knocked on the door. When those inside realized it was `Umar, Khabab quickly hid in a corner of the house and Fatimah concealed the scroll of the Qur’an.

`Umar came in and asked, “What was that mumbling I just heard?” His sister Fatimah replied, “You heard nothing.” `Umar said in a belligerent tone, “Yes, by Allah! Indeed, I have been informed that you two have joined Muhammad’s religion.” And saying this, he knocked down his brother-in-law. His sister rushed to pull `Umar away from her husband, but he struck her in the face, causing her to bleed. Both Fatimah and Sa`id then said to him, “Yes, we have embraced Islam, and we believe in Allah and His Messenger. So do with us as you please.”

This was a turning point for `Umar. The sight of blood dripping down his sister’s face cracked his hard, dry shell and reached the warm, soft interior underneath – the real `Umar ibn Al-Khattab. He softened, regretted what he had done, and asked his sister to show him the scroll of the Qur’an they were reading. She replied, “You are impure ‘..and none but the purified may touch it (the Noble Qur’an),’ (Al-Waqi`ah 56:79) so get up and perform ablution.” `Umar did so, then he took the scroll which contained Ta-ha Chapter and began to read: “Ta-

Ha¹. We have not sent down the Qur'an unto you (O Muhammad) to cause you distress. But only as a Reminder to those who fear (Allah)." (Ta-Ha 20:1-3) He continued reading until he reached: "Indeed, I am Allah. There is no god except Me, so worship Me and establish regular prayer for My remembrance." (Ta-Ha 20:14)

Umar's Heart Opening Up to Islam

Umar (RA) finished reading the scroll and was so overwhelmed by the sublimity of the words that he could only say, "How good and noble this speech is." On hearing this, Khabab came out of his hiding place and exclaimed, "Rejoice, O Umar! I hope that Allah has chosen you in response to His Prophet's Supplication, for I heard him say, 'O Allah, strengthen Islam with the more beloved of these two men to You: Umar ibn Al-Khattab or Amr ibn Hisham (Abu Jahl):'" [This was due to their strength of character and the indisputable support they would bring to Islam].

At that, Umar said, "O Khabab, lead me to Muhammad (PBBUH) so that I can go to him and embrace Islam."

Umar picked up his sword and went to the place where the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) and his Companions were gathered. He knocked on the door. One of the Companions got up and looked through a crack in the door and saw Umar wearing his sword. In alarm, he returned to report, "O Messenger of Allah! It is Umar ibn Al-Khattab with his sword on!"

Hamzah ibn Abdul-Muttalib said, "Let him in. If he has come seeking good, we will grant it to him! But if he has come seeking evil, we will kill him with his own sword."

Umar entered the room, and the Prophet (PBBUH) rose and walked towards

¹ These disjointed Arabic letters at the beginning of certain chapters are one of the miracles of the Qur'an, and none but Allah knows their meanings.

him. He grabbed him strongly and said, **“What has brought you here, O Ibn Al-Khattab! By Allah, I do not think that you will stop** (your evil behavior towards us) **until Allah sends down a calamity upon you.”**

“O Messenger of Allah,” replied `Umar, “I have come to you as a man who believes in Allah and His Messenger and what has been revealed to you from Allah.” The Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) shouted **“*Allahu Akbar!*”** (Allah is Greater [than everything]) so loudly that all the Companions in the house instantly concluded that `Umar had joined Islam.

`Umar’s acceptance of Islam occurred towards the end of the sixth year of prophethood (during the month of Dhul-Hijjah), only three days after Hamzah accepted Islam.

The News of Umar’s Islam Spreading Across Makkah

Moments after he accepted Islam, `Umar (RA) started to enquire which person in the Quraysh was the fastest at transmitting news (and often rumors as well), similar to the big media outlets we have today. `Umar was told that it was a man named Jamil ibn Ma`mar Al-Jumahi. `Umar went to him and said, “O Jamil! Do you not know that I have embraced Islam and joined Muhammad’s religion (PBBUH)?”

Jamil, very eager to announce this piece of breaking news in the city, did not even ask `Umar to repeat or confirm what he had just said, but instantly got up and rushed to the sanctuary. As soon as Jamil stood at the door of the Ka`bah, he shouted at the top of his voice, “O people of the Quraysh! `Umar has apostatized.” `Umar was right behind him shouting back, “He has told a lie! Rather, I have become a Muslim, and I have testified that there is no god but Allah alone, without partner, and that Muhammad is His Slave and Messenger.”

Hearing the news of `Umar’s conversion and seeing his strong spirit of defiance, the Qurayshi men amassed around him and began to beat him violently.

Although heavily outnumbered, `Umar fought back until a man called Al-`As ibn Wa'il Al-Sahmi intervened on his behalf, saying, "Leave the man alone."

But it did not end there for `Umar (RA). He began to think about who was the most hostile enemy of the Prophet (PBBUH), and one name appeared in his mind: Abu Jahl (`Umar's maternal uncle). `Umar (RA) went and knocked on Abu Jahl's door. Abu Jahl came out and greeted him, saying, "Welcome, my nephew. What brings you here?" `Umar (RA) replied, "I have come to tell you that I believe in Allah (Exalted be He) and His Messenger Muhammed (PBBUH) and have acknowledged the truth of what he brought." Abu Jahl slammed the door in `Umar's face and said, "May Allah disfigure you and what you have brought!"

Muslims Praying in the Open after *Al-Faruq*¹ Joined Islam

Muslims were unable to pray safely near the Ka`bah without the risk of being beaten and abused; this state continued until `Umar embraced Islam.

`Umar said to the Prophet (PBBUH), "Are we not on the true path whether we are dead or alive?" The Prophet (PBBUH) replied, "**Yes indeed. By Him in Whose Hand is my soul, you are on the true path whether you are dead or alive.**" `Umar asked, "Then why should we hide? By the One Who has sent you with the truth, we shall go out (i.e., openly practice and manifest our faith)."

And so the Muslims went out and lined up in two rows. One row was headed by Hamzah and the other by `Umar, while the Prophet (PBBUH) walked in between. As they marched, the stamping of their feet caused dust to fly up from the ground. Finally, they entered the sanctuary, circumambulated the Ka`bah, and prayed peacefully behind the Prophet (PBBUH). Meanwhile, the Quraysh were watching in a state of shock and unprecedented gloom.

¹ The title of '*Al-Faruq*' was given to `Umar by the Prophet (PBBUH). It means the one by whom truth and falsehood are separated and distinguished.

The Prophet (PBBUH) looked at `Umar, who Allah had used to distinguish between truth and falsehood, and said in a contented, optimistic tone, “*Al-Faruq*.” After that moment, `Umar was called *Al-Faruq*. `Abdullah ibn Mas`ud, one of the Prophet’s (PBBUH) Companions, also said, “We have been strong ever since `Umar embraced Islam.”

The Quraysh Changes Its Strategy

`Umar's (RA) conversion to Islam weakened the Quraysh, while giving Islam a remarkable boost and a more overt character. And so, due to the progressively lessened authority of the Quraysh, they had to reconsider the whole situation and devise other measures against the Prophet (PBBUH).

Negotiations and Seeking Compromises

The Quraysh chose the path of negotiation, in which they first employed lures and temptations in the form of worldly possessions and titles. When that strategy failed, they tried to extract compromises and concessions.

First Tactic: The Qurayshi Leaders Negotiating with the Prophet (PBBUH)

The talks between the leaders of the Quraysh and the Prophet (PBBUH) first took the form of enticement and ended with attempts to frustrate him by demanding the impossible.

1. Temptation Attempts

The notables and chiefs of the Quraysh met at the Ka`bah and decided to speak to the Prophet (PBBUH) and again propose what `Utbah ibn Rabi`ah had proposed earlier. They sent for the Prophet (PBBUH) to come to them, and he (PBBUH) came quickly, hoping they might have changed their minds about Islam and was very keen to guide them. However, they made the same proposals that `Utbah had previously made.

After the delegation of chiefs had finished speaking, the Prophet (PBBUH) replied, **"I am not (possessed) as you say. I have not come to you with what I**

brought seeking your wealth, or status among you, or dominion over you. But Allah has sent me to you as a Messenger and has revealed to me a Book. He has commanded me to be a bearer of good news and a warner to you. I have conveyed to you my Lord's Messages, and I have given you good advice. If you accept that with which I have come to you, it will be your good fortune in the life of this world and in the Hereafter. If you reject it, I shall wait patiently for Allah's Command, until Allah judges between me and you..."

The Prophet (PBBUH) Frowns and Turns Away

While the Prophet (PBUH) was fully engrossed in conversation with these influential chiefs of the Quraysh, in the hope that they would embrace Islam, a blind man named `Abdullah ibn Umm Maktum came to ask the Prophet (PBBUH) about an issue. The Prophet (PBBUH) did not wish to be interrupted at that moment. When the blind man became insistent to have an answer, the Prophet (PBBUH) frowned, turned away from him, and turned his attention back to the group of chiefs. Directly afterwards, words of strong reproach came down from Allah to His Prophet (PBBUH):

"He (the Prophet) frowned and turned away, because there came to him the blind man (interrupting). And how can you tell that perhaps he might grow in purity? Or that he might receive admonition, and the reminder might profit him? As for him who regards himself as self-sufficient, you attend to him, though it is no blame to you if he would not purify himself (from disbelief). But as for him who came to you full of eagerness, and with fear (of Allah in his heart), of him you were unmindful. By no means (should it be so)! For it is indeed a message of remembrance. Therefore, let who will, keep it in remembrance!" (`Abasa 80:1-12)

This reproof was from a place of love, like the gentle and caring reproof of a friend, warning the Prophet (PBBUH) to give equal attention to all people and not to prefer one individual or group over another, as happened with `Abdullah

ibn Umm Maktum when he interrupted his conversation with the Qurayshi chiefs. On later occasions, whenever the Prophet (PBBUH) saw Ibn Maktum, he would greet him humbly, saying, **“Welcome to the man regarding whom my Lord rebuked me.”** And he (PBBUH) would ask him, **“Do you need anything?”**

2. Demanding Miracles to Strike Despair into the Heart of the Prophet (PBBUH)

Following the failure of the temptation attempts with the Prophet (PBBUH), the Quraysh began to ask for seemingly impossible matters. Their goal had nothing to do with trying to prove or disprove the Prophet’s truthfulness (PBBUH). This was not their interest at all. Their sole goal was to drive him to frustration and disappointment. Among the things the disbelievers demanded of the Prophet (PBBUH) were:

- a. Makkah was small and constricted, so they asked the Prophet (PBBUH) to invoke Allah (Glorified be He) to move away the mountains surrounding Makkah and make their land wider.
- b. The land of Makkah was barren and not arable, so they asked the Prophet (PBBUH) to cause rivers to gush forth in it like the rivers of Syria and Iraq.
- c. They asked him to resurrect their dead ancestors, in particular Qusai ibn Kilab (who was an old man regarded as honest and trustworthy), to ask them about the truthfulness of the Prophet’s (PBBUH) message.
- d. They asked the Prophet (PBBUH) to invoke Allah (Exalted be He) to send an angel to confirm that what he was saying was the truth and to speak on his behalf.
- e. Lastly, they challenged the Prophet (PBBUH) to cause the sky to fall upon them in pieces as a punishment from Allah.

The Prophet (PBBUH) listened to their absurd requests and then returned home feeling disappointed and sad with their intractable stance on his message – that they should just fight it and destroy it, instead of understanding it and embracing it.

Allah (the Most High) responded to their farfetched and almost playful requests with the following Qur’anic verses:

“They said, ‘We will never believe in you until you cause a spring to gush forth from the earth for us. Or you have a garden of date palms and grapes, and cause rivers to gush forth in their midst abundantly. Or you cause the heaven to fall upon us in fragments, as you have claimed (will happen), or you bring Allah and the angels before us face to face. Or you have a house of gold. Or you ascend into heaven – and even then, we will not believe in your ascension until you bring down to us a book we may read.’ Say (O Muhammad), ‘Exalted is my Lord! Am I anything but a human, sent as a Messenger?’ And nothing prevented the people from believing when guidance came to them except that they said, ‘Has Allah sent a human as (His) Messenger?’ Say, ‘If there were on the earth angels walking securely, We (Allah) would certainly have sent down to them from the heaven an angel as a Messenger.’ Say, ‘Sufficient is Allah for a Witness between me and you. Verily! He is the All-Knower, the All-Seer of His servants.’” (Al-Isra` 17:90-96)

Allah (the Most Exalted) also said to them:

“If there were a divine recitation that could cause mountains to move, or the earth to split, or the dead to speak (it would have been this Qur’an). But all matters are by Allah’s Will. Have the believers not yet realized that had Allah willed, He could have guided all of humanity? And disasters will continue to afflict the disbelievers or strike close to their homes for their misdeeds, until Allah’s Promise comes to pass. Surely Allah never fails in His Promise.” (Al-Ra`d 13:31)

Second Tactic: Obtaining Concessions and Compromises from the Prophet (PBBUH)

All the Quraysh's efforts to make the Prophet (PBBUH) accept wealth and status in return for abandoning his mission were met with total failure. Therefore, they adopted a new technique, that of watering down the new religion to make it accommodate their pagan beliefs and mode of worship. Among the concessions they sought to extract were the following:

1. *“Let us Worship What You Worship, and You Worship What We Worship”*

They said to the Prophet (PBBUH), “O, Muhammad! Come, let us worship what you worship, and you worship what we worship [according to another narration by Al-Tabari they suggested: you worship our gods, Al-Lat and Al-`Uzza, for a year, and we shall worship your God for a year]. If what you worship is better than what we worship, we will get the benefit of it; and if what we worship is better than what you worship, you will get the benefit of it.”

To dismiss such a ludicrous proposal once and forever, Allah revealed the whole of the following Qur'anic chapter concerning any disbelievers:

“Say, ‘O disbelievers! I do not worship what you worship. Nor are you worshipers of what I worship. Nor will I be a worshiper of what you worship. Nor will you be worshipers of what I worship. To you be your religion, and to me my religion (Islamic Monotheism).’” (Al-Kafirun 109:1-6)

2. The Disbelievers Seek Modifications to the Qur'an

The Quraysh still did not give up. They opened a new round of concessions that centered on demanding (purely by way of spite and mockery) amendments and alterations to the Noble Qur'an (by replacing the mention of punishment with reward, the things unlawful with making them lawful, the censure of their pagan gods and mode of worship with praise of them and to omit any mention

of resurrection). Allah's Response to such kinds of demands was decisive, putting an end to them forever:

“And when Our Clear Verses are recited to them, those who hope not for their meeting with Us, say, ‘Bring us a Qur’an other than this, or change it.’ Say (O Muhammad), ‘It is not for me to change it of my own accord. I only follow that which is revealed to me. Verily, I fear if I were to disobey my Lord, the torment of the Great Day (i.e., the Day of Resurrection).’” (Yunus 10:15)

3. Al-Nadr ibn Al-Harith

Another counter measure to the Prophet's (PBBUH) message came in the form of Al-Nadr ibn Al-Harith, one of the vilest men of the Quraysh. After his return from Al-Hirah (an ancient city in south-central Iraq) where he studied the Persian religion, culture, and tales, it became his habit to challenge the Prophet (PBBUH) in public with the Persian knowledge he had acquired.

Every time the Prophet (PBBUH) preached Islam in an assembly – and warned people against the bad ending of the disbelievers of past ages and the consequences of their actions and choices that were yet to be faced on Judgement Day – Al-Nadr would stand and narrate to the Makkans the tales and beliefs he had learned in Persia. He would conclude by asking the assembly, “In what respect is Muhammed's speech better than mine? Does he not draw from the myths of ancient people just as I do?”

A Revelation in Clear Arabic Language

The Quraysh circulated Al-Nadr's counter-speeches against the Prophet (PBBUH). Their propaganda offensive did not end there. They accused the Prophet (PBBUH) of listening to and being influenced by Jabr Al-Rumi (the Roman), a young Christian slave belonging to `Amir ibn Al-Hadrami. He used to recite the Torah and the Gospel. The Quraysh claimed that he was the Prophet's (PBBUH) source of information and knowledge; that Muhammed (PBBUH) just repeated what he had heard from him.

Allah (Glorified be He) refuted their false accusations and claims in the Qur'anic verse, saying: “And indeed We (Allah) know that they (disbelievers) say, ‘It is only a human being who teaches him (Muhammad).’ The tongue of the man they refer to is foreign, while this (the Qur’an) is a clear Arabic tongue.” (Al-Nahl 16:103)

Jabr Al-Rumi, to whom the Quraysh attributed the authorship of the Qur’an, was a non-Arab. He could not have taught Muhammed (PBBUH) anything, and this reduced their claims to nothing.

4. The Quraysh Ask the Jews About the Veracity of the Prophet (PBBUH)

When all avenues were closed to the *Mushrikin* and they were powerless to undermine the Prophet (PBBUH) and his message, they decided to investigate the Prophet (PBBUH) by asking the Jewish rabbis in Yathrib (later Madinah) about him.

They sent two of the Prophet’s (PBBUH) fiercest opponents on this mission, namely Al-Nadr ibn Al-Harith and `Uqbah ibn Abu Mu`ait. The Quraysh’s leaders told their envoys, “Ask them about Muhammad, describe to them his attributes and inform them of what he says; for they are the people of the first Scripture (i.e., the Torah) and possess knowledge that we do not have regarding the prophets.”

The two Qurayshi envoys met the Jewish rabbis and described to them the Prophet (PBBUH) and his message. When they had finished, the Jewish rabbis replied, “Ask him about three issues of which we shall tell you. If he correctly informs you of them, he is a prophet sent (by Allah). If he cannot, then the man is a false claimant; so, consider how you should deal with him.

- Ask him about what happened to the youths of an earlier generation who went away, for there is an amazing story about them.

- Ask him about a man who journeyed across the earth from east to west. What was his news?
- Ask him about the soul. What is it?"

Al-Nadr and `Uqbah returned to Makkah and announced at their arrival to the Quraysh, "O people of the Quraysh, we come to you with the information that will conclusively decide between you and Muhammad."

Do Not Say, "I Shall Do This," and Forget Allah's Will

The Quraysh's leaders went to the Prophet (PBBUH) and posed the three questions to him. The Prophet (PBBUH) replied, "**I will tell you tomorrow about what you have asked me.**" But the Prophet (PBBUH) did not say, "*Insha`a Allah*"¹.

They departed, and the Prophet (PBBUH) waited for the revelation to come down with the answers. However, fifteen nights elapsed without him either receiving Revelation or Jibril (PBBUH) coming to him. The people of Makkah began to gossip and mock him. The Prophet (PBBUH) was saddened by the delay of the Divine Revelation and grieved by what the people of Makkah were saying about him.

Then Jibril came to him with a Qur'anic revelation containing the answers. But before giving the answers, it alerted the Prophet (PBBUH), and each of us as well, to always base every future plan or action on Allah's Will, saying: "And never say of anything, 'I shall do such and such thing tomorrow' without saying, 'If Allah so wills!' And remember your Lord when you forget, and say, 'It may be that my Lord guides me unto a nearer way of truth than this.'" (Al-Kahf 18:23-24)

¹ If Allah so wills; meaning that something can only happen if Almighty Allah wills it.

The Answer to the Three Questions

Allah (Exalted be He) sent down the Qur'anic verses that provided the answers to the questions posed to the Prophet (PBBUH) regarding the youths of an earlier generation who had disappeared, the east-to-west traveling king, and the soul.

- **The answer to the first question:**

“Do you think that the people of the Cave and the Inscription were of Our Wondrous Signs? (Remember) when the young men fled for refuge (from their disbelieving folk) to the Cave, they said, ‘Our Lord! Bestow on us mercy from Yourself, and facilitate for us our affair in the right way!’” (Al-Kahf 18:9-10)

The Qur'anic verses continued to narrate the story of the young men in the cave until Allah's Saying: “Say, ‘Allah knows best how long they stayed. With Him is (the knowledge of) the unseen of the heavens and the earth. How clearly He sees and hears (everything)! They have no Protector other than Him, and He makes none to share in His Decision and His Rule.’” (Al-Kahf 18:26)

- **The answer to the second question:**

“And they ask you about Dhul-Qarnain (i.e., the Two-Horned King). Say, ‘I shall recite to you something of his story. Verily, We (Allah) established him on the earth, and We gave him means (to accomplish) everything. So he followed a way...’” (Al-Kahf 18:83-85) and the Qur'anic verses continued to describe the whole story of the east-to-west travelling king.

- **The answer to the third question:**

“And they ask you (O Muhammad) concerning the spirit. Say, ‘The spirit is one of the things, the knowledge of which is only with my Lord. And of knowledge, you (humankind) have been given only a little.’” (Al-Isa' 17:85)

The previous section offered only brief outlines of how the disbelievers opposed and obstructed the Prophet's (PBBUH) call to Islam. They used an arsenal of obstructive techniques that varied in intensity and shifted from harshness to diplomacy, from rude arguments to soft negotiations and bargaining, from threats and intimidation to persuasion and temptation, and so forth. However, all their methods were futile in stopping Islam from advancing forward and growing larger. Still the disbelievers were obstinate, and still they did not believe, despite the clear vision and coherent evidence offered to them by Islam.

A Question Poses Itself: What Stopped the Disbelievers from Believing?

Did the Quraysh doubt Prophet Muhammad's (PBBUH) prophethood? And if they did not doubt his prophethood, why did they not believe in him and follow him? These are key questions that need to be clarified.

Addressing the First Question:

Did the Quraysh Doubt His Prophethood?

The answer is no. Neither the Quraysh nor their leaders doubted Prophet Muhammad's (PBBUH) prophethood. Here are a few of numerous examples of how key members in the Qurayshi community genuinely held the belief that he was indeed a Messenger of Allah (PBBUH).

1. `Utbah ibn Abu Lahab

One day after `Utbah had divorced the Prophet's (PBBUH) daughter, he approached the Prophet (PBBUH) and showed further disrespect by defiantly shouting at him, "I disbelieve in 'By the star when it goes down' (Al-Najm 53:1) and in 'Then he (Jibril) approached and came closer.'" (Al-Najm 53:8) In other words, `Utbah rejected him and his revelations from Almighty Allah.

`Utbah then started to act violently towards the Prophet (PBBUH), tearing his shirt and spitting in his face, but the spittle did not touch the Prophet (PBBUH). At that moment, the Prophet (PBBUH) supplicated Allah against him, saying, **“O Allah! Set one of Your dogs on him.”**

Fear and shock filled `Utbah's heart, for he knew that the Prophet's (PBBUH) supplication would surely be accepted and answered.

Ever since then, `Utbah was never alone and always kept himself surrounded by some fellow tribesmen. Then, during one of his journeys to Al-Sham, he stopped with his companions for the night [in the region of Zarqa' in Jordan] when, to the great horror of `Utbah, a lion approached the group and began to circle them. `Utbah at once recalled the Prophet's (PBBUH) supplication and said, “By Allah, this lion will surely devour me just as Muhammad has supplicated. He has killed me while he is in Makkah and I am here in Al-Sham.” The lion then bypassed all `Utbah's guards and companions and went straight to him, grabbed him by the head, and killed him.

2. Abu Jahl

A camel trader from Irash had brought some camels to sell in Makkah. Abu Jahal purchased them but procrastinated on payment.

The aggrieved stranger came to the sanctuary seeking justice and appealed to the Quraysh chiefs assembled there for redressal of his grievance. Out of a desire to mock, they directed this trader to go to Muhammad (PBBUH). They knew well the enmity existing between him and Abu Jahl and expected that he would receive a harsh rebuff from Abu Jahl. So they said to the man, “Go to him (Muhammad PBBUH), he will aid you against him (Abu Jahl).”

After the Prophet (PBBUH) listened to the trader's complaint, he rose to his aid. When the Quraysh saw the Prophet (PBBUH) and the trader leaving together, they sent one of their men to follow them and report back what happened.

The Prophet (PBBUH) took the camel trader to Abu Jahl's house, knocked on his door, and called him to come out. Abu Jahl came out of his house, his face noticeably pale. The Prophet (PBBUH), in an authoritative tone, said to him, **"Give this man his right."** Strangely, Abu Jahl replied, "Right away. Do not leave until I pay him what is due to him." Then he went inside, fetched the sum owed to the man, and gave it to him. The Prophet (PBBUH) went away saying to the Irashi man, **"Go to your business."**

The Quraysh, completely shocked by Abu Jahl's submissiveness to Muhammad's demand, asked him when he joined their gathering, "Woe to you! What has happened to you? We have never seen anything like what you did (today)!" Abu Jahl explained, "By Allah, as soon as he (the Prophet) knocked on my door and I heard his voice, I was filled with terror. And when I came out to meet him, there was a bull camel high above his head. I have never seen such a bull camel before with such a head, neck, and canines. By Allah, if I had refused, it would have devoured me."

3. Abu Sufyan, Abu Jahl, and Al-Akhnas

The Prophet's (PBBUH) recitation of the Glorious Qur'an had a captivating appeal. Whenever he (PBBUH) recited, attention was drawn and minds fixed on his recitation. One night, Abu Sufyan ibn Harb, Abu Jahl (`Amr ibn Hisham), and Al-Akhnas ibn Shurayq went out separately and seated themselves outside the Prophet's (PBBUH) house in order to listen to his fascinating recitation.

Each of the three men took up a position for listening, without being aware of the presence of one another. It was so sweet to listen to the Qur'an, and sweeter still because the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) himself was the reciter.

All through the night, the Prophet (PBBUH) carried on reciting the Qur'an in a calm, tranquil voice until dawn arrived. As the three men got up to depart for home, they met, and they knew what the others were there for. They exchanged blame and said, "Do not come back again! If some feeble-minded

people see you, this will weaken your position and give Muhammad victory over you.”

The second night came, and they did the same thing. All three men went and listened to Muhammad (PBBUH) reciting the Qur’an for the whole night and departed at dawn. It was as if their legs carried them, with no volition of their own, to the Prophet’s (PBBUH) house to listen to him reciting his Lord’s Book.

They again caught up with one another on the road and reprimanded one another for coming. Yet this did not stop them from going again on the third night and listening to the Prophet’s (PBBUH) recitation. They felt their vulnerability to the Prophet’s (PBBUH) call to Islam, but their egos were too large to yield to it. They finally made vows never to repeat what they had done.

This further demonstrates that the leaders of the Quraysh actually listened to and were deeply affected by the truth of the Prophet’s (PBBUH) message of Islam but, because of attachment to a number of worldly considerations (such as power, prestige, and economic gains), they were unwilling to accept it.

Addressing the Second Question:

Despite Evident Proof, What Prevented the Quraysh from Accepting Belief in the Prophet’s (PBBUH) Message?

The answer lies in three essential areas:

1. Rivalry, Spite, and Envy

Many prominent Qurayshi leaders saw the Prophet (PBBUH) as an inherent threat to the status quo of their tribe and their position in it, and others were simply envious. Among such men were:

a. Al-Walid ibn Al-Mughirah

Al-Walid was one of the richest and most eminent chiefs of the Quraysh. When the Noble Qur'an was revealed to Prophet Muhammad (PBBUH), he said, in haughty protest, "Is the revelation sent down to Muhammad while I am ignored, when I am the greatest man in the Quraysh and its chief? Is Abu Mas'ud 'Amr ibn 'Umair Al-Thaqafi ignored too, when he is the chief of Thaqif? Even though we are the two greatest men of the two cities (Makkah and Al-Ta'if)?" In response to this, Allah (Glorified be He) revealed:

"And they say, 'Why is not this Qur'an sent down to some great man of the two towns (Makkah and Al-Ta'if)?' Is it they who would portion out your Lord's Mercy? It is We (Allah) Who have portioned out between them their livelihood in this world and have raised some of them above others in rank, so that some may employ others in their work (i.e., because one needs the other, and vice versa). But the Mercy of your Lord (O Muhammad) is better than whatever (wealth of this world) they amass." (Al-Zukhruf 43:31-32)

b. 'Amr ibn Hisham (Abu Jahl)

He was one of the Qurayshi leaders and an elder of the Banu Makhzum clan of the Quraysh. He set himself as an archenemy of the Prophet (PBBUH).

On one occasion, 'Amr ibn Hisham was directly asked why he had not accepted belief in Muhammad (PBBUH), although he was profoundly moved by the power of the Qur'an and had showed a keenness to hear it recited on three consecutive nights. He gave an answer that reflected the deep tribal prejudice that existed in Makkah at that time. He said, "We (Banu Makhzum) and Banu 'Abd Manaf (the clan to which the Prophet PBBUH belonged) have competed with each other for honor and rank. They fed people, so we fed people. They provided transport (to the pilgrims), so we provided transport. They gave in charity, so we gave in charity, until we were neck and neck with them, like two racehorses. Then they said, 'A prophet has arisen from among us to whom revelations come from heaven? How could we compete with this? By Allah, we will never believe in him

or accept his words as true.”

2. Concern for Social Standing Among the Qurayshi Elite

Makkah’s upper classes knew nothing other than this physical life of material appearances and attachments. Therefore, they were greatly anxious about their wealth, prestige, and authority in it. They saw Islam condemning the wrongful aspects of their lives and their highhanded and abusive treatment of the poor and weak sections of society. Islam treated all people as equal, regardless of whether they were poor or well off, and, in their eyes, this posed a threat to their status quo in Makkah, which clearly favored the ruling elite.

With each new success Islam attained, fear intensified in the aristocratic circles about the potential prospect of this message spreading across the Arabian Peninsula and, in turn, its enlargement and development into greater numbers of followers of Muhammad (PBBUH).

3. Dread of Resurrection and Judgement Day

Before Islam, people in Makkah lived a life of indulgence in pleasures and accumulation of wealth by any means, fair or foul, to obtain these pleasures. Hence, the rich among them did not regard usury and other vices as something unethical that they must avoid.

They also had a pagan belief system that condoned their abhorrent actions and sinful ways as long as they pledged allegiance and gave expiatory offerings to the idols they worshipped. No matter how depraved or evil a person was, an animal slaughtered to the idols was sufficient to absolve him of all his sins. Therefore, nothing withheld people from obscenities (due to a total absence of consequences). They only needed to have enough to bribe the pagan gods with offerings. This lack of accountability (and fear of consequences) created great injustice in the Makkan society.

It is thus understandable why some people, with such motives, rejected Islamic beliefs. The Prophet (PBBUH) brought them frightening Qur'anic verses, that put fear in their hearts, about Allah's Ever-Watchful Eye over all their actions and about resurrection to receive reward or punishment. The Noble Qur'an says:

“Then, when the Deafening Blast comes to pass (the Day of Resurrection's second blowing of the Trumpet), on that Day every person will flee from their own siblings, and (even) their mother and father, and (even) their spouse and children. For then everyone will have enough concern of their own (to make them heedless of others). On that Day some faces will be bright, laughing, rejoicing at good news (of Paradise). And other faces, that Day, will be dust-stained; covered by darkness. Those are the disbelievers, the wicked ones.” (`Abasa 80:33-42)

The Quraysh Imposes a General Boycott

The perplexity of the *Mushrikin* increased as they began to run out of schemes to derail Islam. Another obstacle manifested in the mutual insistence of Banu Hashim and Banu `Abdul-Muttalib on protecting their own clansman, Prophet Muhammad (PBBUH). This collective stance was taken up by all members except Abu Lahab, who remained on the side of the Quraysh. So, the Quraysh began to think of new methods to fight the Prophet (PBBUH).

Boycott Begins

The disbelievers of the Quraysh got together and formed a pact against Banu Hashim and Banu `Abdul-Muttalib to pressure them to withdraw their protection from the Prophet (PBBUH). It was decided that no one should marry from the women of these two clans or give them women in marriage, sell anything to them or buy anything from them, sit with them or associate with them. This is identical to the present-day economic and financial sanctions imposed by powerful states to coerce smaller states to bend to their will.

Their agreement was put into writing and the unjust parchment was hung inside the Ka`bah. It stipulated: No peace settlement should be accepted from Banu Hisham, nor should they be shown mercy until they hand over the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) to be killed.

Abu Talib's Reaction

Abu Talib treated this economic and social boycott as a declaration of war on his clan. He assembled all the members of Banu Hashim and Banu `Abdul-Muttalib and asked them to move to a secluded mountain pass, known as Shi`b Abu Talib. They all, believers and non-believers alike, agreed to side with Abu Talib and enter the pass with him, with the exception of Abu Lahab, who chose to remain on the Quraysh's side against his own clansmen.

Several Muslims from outside Banu Hashim and Banu `Abdul-Muttalib voluntarily joined them in the pass in support of the Prophet (PBBUH). This all took place in the month of Muharram during the seventh year of prophethood.

Shi`b Abu Talib (or Abu Talib's Pass) can be likened to a narrow road with one exit; as long as it was well secured, its inhabitants would be secure, since the pass contained the clan dwellings during the Qurayshi siege of the Muslims and their supporters.

Sufferance Inside the Mountain Pass

The Quraysh maintained a tight security cordon around Abu Talib's Pass to prevent entry and exit. Despite this siege, some Muslims and besieged members of Banu Hashim were able to avoid the guards and enter the marketplaces to purchase food supplies. Still, they faced another setback when they reached the markets. Abu Lahab was on the lookout for them and convinced the traders to raise their prices so the Muslims could not buy any food supplies. Standing by the commodities, he shouted, "O salesmen! Raise the prices for Muhammad's followers so they cannot afford to buy anything from you! You know me as a rich man of his word! I shall compensate your losses!" Other wealthy members of the Quraysh started doing the same as Abu Lahab, and the Muslims had to return empty handed to their starving relatives.

The boycott was rigorously applied. Hunger struck everyone besieged in the pass to the extent that they tied stones to their stomachs to lessen the hunger pangs and resorted to eating tree leaves. Cries of hunger from their women and children could be heard from beyond the pass.

During that time of enormous hardship, the Prophet's (PBBUH) followers maintained exemplary patience and perseverance. Some examples of their fortitude deserve a special mention:

Sa`d ibn Abu Waqqas

Due to severe hunger, one of the Prophet's (PBBUH) Companions, named Sa`d ibn Abu Waqqas, had to eat a piece of dry camel skin which he found while relieving himself. He described the incident, saying, "I went out one day to relieve myself. While I was urinating, I heard a clattering noise coming from where I was urinating. It was a piece of dry camel skin. I picked it up, washed it, burned it, ground it between two stones (into a rough powder), and then swallowed it with some water. It gave me strength for three days."

This was one among many instances of the indomitable will of the Prophet's (PBBUH) Companions. None of them abandoned the Prophet (PBBUH) or backed away from supporting him; rather, the circumstances they faced strengthened their resolve to continue to stand by him.

Patrols Protecting the Prophet (PBBUH)

Nightfall brought heightened concern for the Prophet's safety (PBBUH). To thwart any assassination attempts, Abu Talib had one of his sons or brothers stand guard in alternating shifts throughout the night while the Prophet (PBBUH) was sleeping. There was a general sadness among Banu Hashim because of what they were being put through by the Quraysh, despite their notable position and many favors upon the Arab tribes. However, they remained steadfast in standing by their clansman's side.

Preaching of Islam Continues, Undeterred by the Siege

The Prophet (PBBUH), along with the Muslims, maintained their mission to spread the message of Islam. They went out to meet and preach to the people during the Hajj and other major seasons, especially during the Sacred Months¹.

¹ The four months of the Arabic lunar calendar in which fighting and bloodshed were forbidden. They are Dhul-Qa`dah, Dhul-Hijjah, Muharram, and Rajab.

The tough siege laid by the Quraysh lasted for three consecutive years, during which the revelations continued to descend upon the Prophet (PBBUH), and his followers grew deeper and deeper in moral strength.

There are no records of the Muslims complaining about hunger, cold, constraints, or the adversities they faced during the siege. None are recorded to have fled from these harsh living conditions and Islam, to go and enjoy the comforts and luxuries of life. Instead, they were seeking something far worthier – Allah’s Good Pleasure and Mercy.

Prelude to the Breaking of the Siege

The ordeals the Prophet (PBBUH) went through for Islam’s sake created sympathizers and drew people closer to Islam. Among those sympathetic Makkans was Hisham ibn `Amr ibn Rabi`ah, a chivalrous man highly respected among his people.

He used to load his camel with food supplies and take it secretly during the night to the entrance of the pass where the Muslims were isolated. He would then untie the reins of the camel and let it go free, whipping it on the sides so that it went running right into the pass. Its load would be then taken by the Muslims. Hisham repeated this act several times, and it helped bring a huge relief to the Muslims in their isolation.

Assistance also came from Hakim ibn Hizam who used to convey quantities of wheat to his maternal aunt Khadijah (RA). One time, his assistance was intercepted by Abu Jahl. He tried to block the supply, and only when Abul-Bakhtari ibn Hisham, one of the leaders of the Quraysh, intervened did Hakim manage to deliver the wheat to his aunt.

The Siege Divides Opinion Among the Quraysh

The boycott could not persist any longer. Some fair men of the Quraysh, who were blood relatives of the besieged people, grew increasingly dissatisfied with this unjust pact and worked towards ending the boycott. The first person to take action was Hisham ibn `Amr. He continued to maintain kinship ties with Banu Hashim.

The day came when he could not bear to witness the injustice they were suffering any longer, so he went to Zuhair ibn Abu Umayyah, whose mother was `Atikah bint `Abdul-Muttalib (the Prophet's PBBUH maternal aunt). He said to him, "O Zuhair, are you content to eat food, wear clothes, and marry women while your maternal uncles are in the condition in which you know them to be, unable to buy or sell, and unable to give or take in marriage? I swear by Allah, had they been the maternal cousins of Abu Al-Hakam ibn Hisham (i.e., Abu Jahl), and you were to ask him to boycott them the same as he has asked you to do (against your maternal cousins), he would never have responded to you."

Zuhair replied, "Woe be to you, O Hisham! What can I do? I am but one man. By Allah, if I had another man with me, I would rise to annul the boycott and would not rest until I had done so."

"You have found a man," Hisham said.

"Who?" Zuhair asked.

"Myself," Hisham replied.

"Find for us a third man," Zuhair said.

The two men thus agreed to revoke the boycott document and secretly sought to convince others. They convinced three men to join in their endeavor, namely Al-Mut`am ibn `Adi, Abul-Bakhtari ibn Hisham, and Zam`ah ibn Al-Aswad. These five men were determined to abolish the pact and put an end to the boycott.

Annulment of the Pact and the End of the Siege

The next morning, when the clans had gathered in their meeting place, Zuhair ibn Abu Umayyah arrived wearing a cloak. After circumambulating the Ka`bah seven times, he addressed the people, saying, "O People of Makkah! Shall we eat food and wear clothes while Banu Hisham are left to perish, neither buying nor selling? By Allah, I shall not rest until this wrongful document that severs relationships is torn up."

Abu Jahl was on one side of the sanctuary, and hearing this he shouted back at once, "You lie! By Allah, it shall not be torn up."

Zam`ah ibn Al-Aswad said, "By Allah, you are a greater liar. We never agreed to the writing of this document in the first place."

Abul-Bakhtari said, "Zam`ah has spoken the truth. We did not agree to what was written in this document, nor do we approve of it."

Al-Mut`im ibn `Adi said, "Both of you have spoken the truth, and anyone who says otherwise is a liar. We clear ourselves before Allah of this document and what is written in it." Hisham ibn `Amr said much the same thing.

Abu Jahl was dumbfounded, and he responded by saying, "This is a matter that (you) planned at night and agreed upon elsewhere." He then withdrew, and the debate over the issue proceeded among the remaining people present.

Abu Talib was sitting in a corner of the sanctuary and witnessed all that was happening between Abu Jahl and those opposing the siege. Previously, the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) had foretold Abu Talib about the fate of the document, saying, **"O uncle, my Lord, Almighty Allah has sent termites upon the document of the Quraysh. They have eaten almost all of it, leaving only the part on which Allah's Name has been mentioned: In Your Name, O Allah."** Abu Talib asked, "Is it your Lord Who has informed you of this?" The Prophet (PBBUH) replied, **"Yes."**

Right at this point of the argument, Abu Talib decided that this was his chance to step in and announce to the Quraysh the revelation that his nephew (PBBUH) had received about the destruction of the document. He stood up and said, “O assembly of the Quraysh! My nephew has told me such and such (what has happened to your boycott pact). Bring out your document. If what he has said is true, you must desist from boycotting us and give up its terms; and if what he has said is false, I will surrender my nephew to you (to kill).”

The Quraysh agreed to Abu Talib’s proposal. They brought the document, opened it, and found that it was as the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) had described: eaten away by termites, with nothing left except the part bearing Allah’s Name. The oppressive document was torn up and the siege was lifted. The Prophet (PBBUH) and his supporters came out of the mountain pass to live in Makkah once again, shouting, “*Allahu Akbar* (Allah is Greater [than everything])! *Allahu Akbar!*”

Abu Talib’s Illness and the Quraysh’s Last Attempt for Give and Take on Both Sides

After experiencing three tough years, the Prophet (PBBUH) along with his Companions and kindred left Abu Talib’s Pass. Despite the siege, not much had been achieved by the Quraysh. The Prophet (PBBUH) remained firm on his path of calling people to Islam, while the disbelievers remained inflexible on their stance of destroying him and Islam.

Abu Talib was now over eighty years old and still fully supportive and protective of his nephew. Yet the succession of grievous occurrences, especially the siege, had taken their toll on his health and he fell ill.

The Quraysh feared that this could be a terminal illness and considered that if they were to harm his nephew after his death, their reputation would be tarnished. They were also apprehensive of losing their position to the Muslims, since the Prophet’s (PBBUH) religion had become widespread among all tribes

of the Quraysh. His followers were increasing and included men such as `Umar ibn Al-Khattab and Hamzah ibn `Abdul-Muttalib. To meet these fears, a group of Qurayshi notables decided to go to Abu Talib to talk to him about his nephew and try to negotiate a compromised settlement acceptable to both sides. Among the negotiators were `Utbah ibn Rabi`ah, Abu Jahl ibn Hisham, Umayyah ibn Khalaf, and Sufyan ibn Harb.

They visited Abu Talib and said to him, "O Abu Talib, you know how high your rank is among us. You are aware of the (ill) condition that has come upon you. We are deeply concerned about you. You know the conflict that has arisen between us and your nephew. Summon him and put conditions on us for him and conditions on him for us. Let him leave us alone, and we will leave him alone. Let him follow his religion, and we will follow ours."

Abu Talib sent for the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH). When he (PBBUH) arrived, he spoke to him, saying, "O my nephew, here are the notables of your people. They have gathered to ask that both you and they give and take (mutual concessions)."

"Yes," the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) began, **"let them (all) give me one word by which they will rule the Arabs and subject the non-Arabs to them."**

Abu Jahl replied anxiously, "Yes, by your father, we will even give you ten (words)." The Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) said, **"It is that you say, 'La ilaha illa Allah (there is no god but Allah)' and renounce all that you worship besides Him."**

Hearing this, the chiefs of the Quraysh clapped their hands in discontent and said, "Do you want to make all the gods One God? This indeed is something astonishing!" Then they talked to one another and said, "By Allah, this man will not give you anything (of the concessions) that you want, so go away and stay firm on the religion of your forefathers until Allah judges between you and him."

The men of the Quraysh dispersed and left the gathering.

The Year of Sorrow

Abu Talib's Death

It was the tenth year of prophethood. The previous conversation was Abu Talib's final encounter with the Quraysh, after which his illness began to worsen.

As Abu Talib's condition deteriorated and his death approached, the Prophet (PBBUH) visited him and found Abu Jahl with him.

The Prophet (PBBUH) said to his dying uncle, **“O uncle, say, ‘*La ilaha illa Allah* (there is no god but Allah); words which I can advance as a plea in your favor before Allah.”** Abu Jahl held Abu Talib back from uttering it by interrupting and saying, “O Abu Talib! Do you want to renounce `Abdul-Muttalib's religion?”

Finally, Abu Talib died without declaring the testimony of faith in the only One God. At that, the Prophet (PBBUH) said, **“I will keep asking (Allah for) forgiveness for you unless I am forbidden (by Allah) to do so.”**

Soon after this, the following Qur'anic verse was revealed: “It is not (proper) for the Prophet and the believers to seek forgiveness for the *Mushrikin* (those who associate others with Allah in Divinity or worship), even if they were close relatives, after it has become clear to them that they are the dwellers of Hellfire (because they died in a state of disbelief).” (Al-Tawbah 9:113)

Allah (Glorified be He) also revealed the following regarding Abu Talib: “You (O Prophet) surely cannot guide whoever you like, but it is Allah Who guides whoever He wills. And He is most knowing of the (rightly) guided.” (Al-Qasas 28:56)

Abu Talib acted as a stronghold for the Prophet (PBBUH) against the various abuse and attacks against him by the insolent and overbearing men of his people.

With his uncle's death, the Prophet (PBBUH) lost the man who surrounded him with his care and made it possible for him to preach Islam freely.

Khadijah's Death

Two months after the death of Abu Talib, Lady Khadijah (RA) fell ill. She was sixty-five years old. Her health had significantly deteriorated due to the hardships she had endured. The tough three-year boycott experience was particularly difficult for a woman used to living a life of luxury.

In their twenty-five years of marriage, Lady Khadijah (RA) was a gracious blessing of Allah to the Prophet (PBBUH). She always comforted him when he was worried and supported him during difficult times. When her illness became severe and she was about to depart from this world, glad tidings from Angel Jibril (PBUH) arrived. Jibril said to the Prophet (PBBUH), **“O Messenger of Allah, here is Khadijah coming to you with a vessel containing a condiment or food or a drink. When she comes to you, convey to her greetings of peace from her Lord, and from me as well, and give her glad tidings of a house of hollowed pearls in Paradise, where there will be neither noise nor fatigue.”** (Sahih Muslim)

When Khadijah passed away, the Prophet's (PBBUH) last remaining support went with her. The Prophet (PBBUH) was reported to have said in praise of her, **“She believed in me when people disbelieved in me. She affirmed my truthfulness when people accused me of lying. She shared her wealth with me when people deprived me. And Allah granted me children only from her, and not from other wives.”**

The Prophet's (PBBUH) Suffering after the Deaths of Abu Talib and Lady Khadijah

These two sad events took place within a very short time, causing grief and pain to the Prophet (PBBUH); but, to the disbelievers of the Quraysh, they

brought feelings of exultation and relief. Now that the Prophet (PBBUH) had lost his chief supporter, Abu Talib, his adversaries finally got the opportunity to openly and brazenly persecute him (PBBUH).

Regarding the increased malevolence of the Quraysh towards him, the Prophet (PBBUH) was narrated to have said, **“The Quraysh was not able to attack me with that which I hated until Abu Talib died.”**

Due to the agonizing emotional impact of the series of tribulations that occurred during the tenth year of prophethood – starting with the death of Abu Talib, followed by that of Lady Khadijah, and the subsequent escalation of assaults on the Prophet (PBBUH) – it was called the Year of Sorrow.

Going with Islam to Al-Ta'if

All setbacks and adversities did not hinder the Prophet (PBBUH) from keeping the Call to Islam moving forward. The Quraysh, however, made it increasingly difficult for the Prophet (PBBUH) to preach and talk to people about Islam.

As the situation became intolerable for the Prophet (PBBUH) in Makkah, he (PBBUH) decided to take the message of Islam to neighboring tribes.

The Prophet (PBBUH) set out for Al-Ta'if, a town located approximately seventy kilometers from Makkah. The main tribe living there was Banu Thaqif, who vied with the Quraysh for the leadership of the Arabs. They worshipped an idol called Al-Lat and built a house for it to compete with the Ka`bah. They used to perform circumambulation around it.

However, despite the rivalry between them, they still shared common interests with the Quraysh and engaged in trade business together. During the summer months, the Qurayshi men frequently came to Al-Ta'if for trade purposes.

The Prophet (PBBUH) undertook his journey to Al-Ta'if during Shawwal, in the tenth year of prophethood. He (PBBUH) set out on foot, accompanied by his freed slave and adopted son, Zaid ibn Harithah. Along the way to Al-Ta'if, the Prophet (PBBUH) invited each tribe he passed by to embrace Islam, but none of them responded positively.

On reaching Al-Ta'if, the Prophet (PBBUH) met with three brother chiefs of Banu Thaqif: `Abd Yalail, Mas`ud, and Habib, sons of `Amr ibn `Umair Al-Thaqafi. The Prophet (PBBUH) sat with them and invited them to believe in Allah alone. Their response was hostile and haughty. One of them said, "By Allah, I will not speak a single word to you. If you truly are a Messenger from Allah, you are too dangerous a person to reply to (because he would increase the Quraysh's position and diminish that of their tribe). If, on the other hand, you are lying about Allah, it is imperative not to speak to you."

The Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) got up to leave and said, **“If you will act in this manner, keep my matter a secret.”** Because he (PBBUH) hated that his people should know about Thaqif rejecting his message and, consequently, be further emboldened against him.

The Prophet (PBBUH) remained in Al-Ta'if for a further ten days, calling its people to Islam, but to no avail.

The Harsh Treatment Inflicted upon the Prophet (PBBUH) on His Departure from Al-Ta'if

The leaders of Banu Thaqif incited the rabble, children, and slaves of the city to chase out the Prophet (PBBUH), when he (PBBUH) decided to leave Al-Ta'if. They gathered along his path in two parallel lines and threw stones at him (PBBUH). Zaid ibn Harithah used his body as a shield to fend off the stones being hurled at the Prophet (PBBUH), and ultimately Zaid sustained a wound in his head.

The town mob continued to pursue the two and pelt them with stones and vile insults until they forced them to take refuge in an orchard on the outskirts of Al-Ta'if belonging to `Utbah and Shaibah, the two sons of Rabi`ah.

Only when they stepped into the orchard did the mob desist and turn back. There, the Prophet (PBBUH) rested under the shade of a grape tree, his feet streaming with blood and his heart overwhelmed by grief.

From a distance, Utbah and Shaibah had watched what the Prophet (PBBUH) had endured at the hands of the rabble of Thaqif.

Collapsing the Two Mountains as a Punishment for the People of Al-Ta'if and the Prophet's (PBBUH) Response to That

During these distressing moments, the Prophet (PBBUH) raised his blessed

hands towards heaven and, with a most heartfelt supplication, sought refuge and consolation with Allah (the Most Exalted), saying, **“O Allah, to You I complain of my weakness, of my helplessness, and of the disregard in which I am held by people. Most Compassionate and Merciful, You are the Lord of the weak, and You are my Lord. To whom do You entrust me? To a distant person (a stranger) who will scowl at me? Or to an enemy You have given power over me? As long as You are not angry with me, I do not care (what happens to me). Nevertheless, Your Protection is all-encompassing for me (i.e., it is what I desire and ask for). I take refuge in the Light of Your Face by which all darkness is illuminated and the affairs of both this world and the Hereafter are rightly ordered against Your Anger descending upon me or Your Wrath befalling me. I will continue to seek Your Pleasure until You are Pleased (with me). There is neither might nor power except with You.”**

In direct response, the Prophet (PBBUH) looked up and saw Angel Jibril (PBUH) in a cloud that was casting its shade over him.

The Angel called upon the Prophet (PBBUH) and said, “Allah (Exalted be He) has heard what your people said to you, and the response they made to you (when you invited them to Islam). Allah has sent to you the Angel of the Mountains (the Angel whom Allah has appointed over the mountains) so that you may order him to do whatever you want to them.”

The Angel of the Mountains then extended greetings of peace to the Prophet (PBBUH) and said, “O Muhammad! Order what you wish. If you want, I will make Al-Akhshabain (two huge mountains flanking Makkah) fall upon them.” The Prophet (PBBUH) said to him, **“No. But I hope that Allah will bring forth from their progeny people who will worship Allah alone, without associating anything (any partner) with Him.”** Jibril (PBUH) responded, “Truthful indeed is the One Who (Allah, the Most Exalted) has called you clement and merciful.”

Winning Over a Convert: `Addas, the Christian Slave

The two sons of Rabi`ah, `Utbah and Shaibah, saw the Prophet's (PBBUH) condition, and their hearts softened towards him in sympathy with what he had gone through.

They summoned `Addas, a Christian slave of theirs, and said to him, "Take a bunch of these grapes to that man (meaning the Prophet, PBBUH)." `Addas did as he was told and placed the grapes in front of the Prophet (PBBUH). As the Prophet (PBBUH) stretched forth his hand to eat, he said, "***Bismillah* (in the Name of Allah)**," after which he ate.

`Addas looked in astonishment at the Prophet's (PBBUH) face and said, "This is something that the people of this land never say."

The Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) asked, "**Which country are you from? And what is your religion?**"

`Addas replied, "I am a Christian from the people of Ninuwa (Nineveh; near present-day Mosul, Iraq)."

The Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) asked, "**From the city of the righteous man, Yunus ibn Matta (Jonah, the son of Matta)?**"

`Addas replied in amazement, "How do you know about Yunus ibn Matta?! By Allah, when I left Ninuwa, not even ten people knew anything about him."

The Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) said, "**He is my brother. He is a Prophet, and I am a Prophet.**"

`Addas forthwith bent over the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) and kissed his forehead, hands, and feet, while Zaid cried emotional tears. The two sons of Rabi`ah saw this as it happened, and one of them exclaimed to the other, "As for your slave, he (meaning the Prophet PBBUH) has spoiled him for you."

When `Addas returned to them, `Utbah and Shaibah said to him, “Woe to you, O `Addas, what made you kiss this man’s head, hands, and feet?” `Addas replied, “O my master, there is no one on earth better than this man. He (PBBUH) has informed me about a matter that only a prophet could know.” They said to him, “Woe to you, O `Addas! Do not let him turn you away from your religion. Certainly, your religion is better than his.”

`Addas was the only convert in the Prophet’s (PBBUH) journey to Al-Ta’if, and after giving up hope of converting anyone from Thaqif into a believer, he (PBBUH) resumed his journey back to Makkah.

The Jinn Comprehends What the Humans Have Failed to

On his journey back to Makkah, the Prophet (PBBUH) stopped for a break at the valley of Nakhla and stayed there for a few days. During his stay there, Allah (Exalted be He) sent a group of Jinn (creatures of fire invisible to human beings), who listened carefully to the Prophet’s (PBBUH) recital of the Glorious Qur’an and grasped the guidance it offered.

The Jinn are mentioned in two places in the Qur’an. The first place is in the Chapter of Al-Ahqaf (The Wind-Curved Sandhills): “And (remember) when We* (Allah) sent towards you (Muhammad) a group of the Jinn, listening to the Qur’an. When they were in its presence, they said, ‘Listen in silence!’ And when it was finished, they returned to their people as warners. They said, ‘O our people! Verily! We have heard a Book (the Qur’an) sent down after Musa (Moses), confirming what came before it, guiding to the truth and to a Straight Path (i.e., Islam).’” (Al-Ahqaf 46:29-30)

The second place is in the Chapter of Al-Jinn (The Jinn): “Say (O Muhammad), ‘It has been revealed to me that a group of the Jinn listened (to the Qur’an) and said, ‘Verily! We have heard a wonderful Recital (the Qur’an). It

* Royal We used by Allah in the Qur’an to denote majesty and power.

guides to the Right Path, and we believe in it. And we will never associate anyone with our Lord (Allah).” (Al-Jinn 72:1-2)

These Qur’anic verses were a joyful sign from Almighty Allah to His Messenger (PBBUH) that he was being listened to, that the message he was preaching was well comprehended, and that Allah’s (Glorified be He) Victory and the success of the Islamic Call were inevitable. With these harbingers of victory from Allah (Exalted be He), the cloud of grief that had enveloped the Prophet (PBBUH) since being chased out of Al-Ta’if dissipated.

The Return to Makkah

Filled with strong commitment and determination to continue spreading Allah’s Message and calling people to Islam, the Prophet (PBBUH) decided to re-enter Makkah.

As the Prophet (PBBUH) and Zaid drew near Makkah, they paused at the cave of Hira’ and started making endeavors to be granted protection by one of the prominent Makkans [in order not to enter Makkah defenseless as they had done in Al-Ta’if]. He (PBBUH) first sent a request to Al-Akhnas ibn Shariq, but his reply was, “I am an ally (of the Quraysh, not a core member), and an ally cannot grant protection.”

The Prophet (PBBUH) sent the same request to Suhail ibn `Amr, who also declined it, saying, “Banu `Amir (of which he was a member) cannot offer protection against Banu Ka`b.”

Finally, the Prophet (PBBUH) sent his request to Mut`im ibn `Adi, who agreed to extend his clan’s protection to the Prophet (PBBUH). Mut`im summoned his sons and clansmen and said, “Put on your weapons and station yourselves at the corners of the House (the Ka`bah), for I have granted protection to Muhammad.”

Mut`im sent word to the Prophet (PBBUH) to enter Makkah, and he (PBBUH) walked into it with Zaid ibn Harithah until he reached the Sacred Sanctuary. There, Mut`im announced from the top of his mount, "O people of the Quraysh! I have granted protection to Muhammad, so let none of you harm him!" Abu Jahl commented with dissatisfaction, "Are you just a grantor of protection or are you a follower (of Muhammad)?" Mut`im replied, "I am just a grantor of protection." Abu Jahl replied with reluctant acceptance, "We give protection to whom you have given protection," and his concern was appeased.

Thus, the Prophet (PBBUH) entered Makkah safely, circumambulated the Ka`bah, prayed two *Rak`abs* (units of prayers), and then returned to his home. All the while of his entry into the city and his circumambulation of the Ka`bah, Mut`im and his sons were surrounding him, with their weapons in hand, until he (PBBUH) walked into his house.

This took place in the month of Dhul-Qa`dah, during the tenth year of prophethood.

Introducing Islam to Tribes and Individuals

The Prophet (PBBUH) endured all the afflictions he passed through with hope in Allah's Mercy and remained firmly devoted to his duty of calling people to Islam.

When it was Hajj season, Makkah hosted people and tribes from all over Arabia. The Prophet (PBBUH) used to approach all hosts individually, tribe by tribe, inviting them to the message of Islam. He (PBBUH) had been doing so since the fourth year of prophethood. Then, during the following years up to the last pre-emigration Hajj season, he (PBBUH) included a request for asylum and support guarantees in his presentation of Islam to the tribes, so that he would be able to deliver Allah's Message with which he had been entrusted.

The Varied Reactions of the Tribes

The responses given by the tribes to the Prophet's (PBBUH) call to believe in Islam can be categorized into four types:

- 1. Good-mannered refusal:** This was the manner of the refusal of Banu Kalb and several other Arab tribes.
- 2. Ill-mannered refusal:** This was the manner of the refusal of Banu Hanifah. Ibn Ishaq, the great Islamic historian, said, "Not one of the Arabs gave him an uglier answer than they." From Banu Hanifah came Musaylimah, the Liar (the man who falsely claimed prophethood).
- 3. Conditional acceptance:** This was the response of Banu `Amir ibn Sa`sa`ah. One of their men said to the Prophet (PBBUH), "Suppose we give you allegiance and Allah (Exalted be He) gives you victory over your opponents, shall we have authority after you?" The Prophet (PBBUH) replied, "**Authority rests with**

Allah, He places it where He pleases.” The man replied, “Should we offer our throats to the Arab swords for your sake, and then when Allah gives you victory, authority goes to someone else? We have no need of your matter (i.e., Islam),” and they refused to support him.

Banu `Amir returned to their homeland and spoke to one of their elders about what happened during this year’s pilgrimage season. They said, “A young man from the Quraysh, one of the Banu `Abdul-Muttalib, who claims to be a prophet, came to us and called upon us to defend him, stand with him, and take him back with us to our land.”

They told him that they refused, upon which the elder put both his hands on his head in shock and said, “O Banu `Amir, is there any way this can be put right? Can this lost opportunity be recovered? No Ishmaelite has ever falsely claimed prophethood. It is indeed the truth. Where was your common sense?”

4. Total and unconditional acceptance: This was the response of several individuals, including Suwayd ibn Al-Samit, Iyas ibn Mu`adh, and Tufayl ibn `Amr Al-Dawsi. They eventually became the nucleus for spreading the message of Islam outside Makkah, especially in Yathrib (Madinah), as we will show later in more detail.

Prophet Muhammad's (PBBUH) Miraculous Night Journey and His Ascension to Heaven

In this critical stage of overlapping difficulties and struggles facing the Prophet (PBBUH), a miraculous event took place whose scope shook not only Makkah, but also human history.

This was the Event of *Isra'* (Prophet Muhammad's night journey from Makkah to Jerusalem) and *Mi`raj* (his ascension into heaven and meeting with Almighty Allah).¹ Several narrations specify dates of when it occurred, but most historians concur that it happened on the 27th night of the month of Rajab. However, the event itself is what is most important.

It commenced from the house of Hind (better known as Umm Hani'), daughter of Abu Talib, where the Prophet (PBBUH) was staying the night with the family of his paternal cousin. On that night, while the Prophet (PBBUH) was asleep in the house of Umm Hani', Angel Jibril (PBUH) came to him with an order to begin with him a special journey, which no one had ever before been honored with.

The Buraq

Amid the peaceful quietude of the surroundings, Jibril came to awaken the Prophet (PBBUH). When they exited the house, the Buraq that would transport them was ready. It is described as a white riding mount bigger than a donkey and

¹ Prophet Muhammad's (PBUH) two miraculous journeys with Archangel Jibril (Gabriel, PBUH), both accomplished in a single night. The first, called the *Isra*, took Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) from Makkah to Jerusalem, where he (PBUH) led all earlier prophets in prayer in Al-Aqsa Mosque. The second, called the *Mi`raj*, took him up through the seven heavens and beyond. As he (PBUH) progressed through the levels of heaven, he spoke with the earlier prophets, including Adam, Abraham, John the Baptist, Moses, and Jesus (PBUT) and saw heaven and hell. At the end of the seventh highest heaven, he (PBUH) and Jibril reached *Sidrat Al-Muntaha* (the Lote-Tree of the Utmost Boundary); an extreme limit beyond which no creation can pass. From there, the Prophet (PBUH) proceeded alone and entered into the presence of Allah. He (Glorified be He) assigned him with the duty of fives daily prayers for Muslims. [Trans. Note]

smaller than a mule. The name “Buraq” derives from the Arabic word ‘*barq*’, meaning lightening, perhaps because it moved faster than the speed of light.

The Prophet (PBBUH) mounted the Buraq with Jibril, and it swiftly carried them from the Sacred Mosque in Makkah to Al-Aqsa Mosque in Jerusalem. On getting there, the Prophet (PBBUH) tied the Buraq to the ring of Al-Aqsa Mosque’s door. The Prophet (PBBUH) then entered the mosque to find all the earlier messengers and prophets assembled to meet him.

Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) Leads All the Prophets in Prayer

Inside the mosque, Prophet Muhammad (PBBUH) saw the messengers and prophets in various stages of prayer, either standing, bowing, or prostrating. When the call to prayer was made and the entire congregation stood in lines waiting to see who would lead the prayer, Jibril (PBUH) took Prophet Muhammad (PBBUH) by the hand and brought him forward. Prophet Muhammad (PBBUH) led all the messengers and prophets in prayer.

Ascension to the Lote-Tree of the Utmost Boundary

Prophet Muhammad (PBBUH) was taken up from *Bait Al-Maqdis* (Jerusalem) to the lowest (earthly) heaven. He (PBBUH) kept ascending with Angel Jibril through the seven heavens, one after another, seeing in each heaven some of his Lord’s Greatest Signs (relating to the unseen realms such as the angels, the previous prophets, paradise, and hellfire).

Ascension through the heavens continued until the Prophet (PBBUH) reached *Sidrat Al-Muntaha*, the Lote-Tree of the Utmost Boundary; beyond it no creation can pass, and near it is the Garden of Eternal Abode. As described in the Qur’an:

“The (Prophet’s) heart did not deny what his eyes saw. Will you then dispute with him (Muhammad) about what he saw (during *Mi`raj*). And indeed he

(Muhammad) saw him (Jibril) at a second descent (i.e., another time), near the Lote-Tree of the Utmost Boundary. Near it is the Paradise of Abode. When there covered the Lote-Tree that which covered it (of nameless splendors). The (Prophet's) sight did not swerve, nor did it transgress (its limit). Indeed, he (Prophet Muhammad) did see of the Greatest Signs of his Lord." (Al-Najm 53:11-18)

In that place, the Prophet (PBBUH) saw Jibril in the angelic form in which Allah (Glorified be He) created him, with six hundred wings filling up the horizon. The first time he saw him in his original form was in the Cave of Hira' (on other occasions, Jibril usually came in the shape of a man).

Afterwards, the Prophet (PBBUH) was taken up into the Divine Presence; the Lord of Honor and Majesty approached so near until He (Glorified be He) was at a distance of, "...two bow lengths or (even) nearer, and He revealed to His servant what He revealed." (Al-Najm 53:9-10)

Only Prophet Muhammad (PBBUH) was raised to this lofty place and proximity to Almighty Allah; not even Angel Jibril had ever reached this close. Prophet Muhammad (PBBUH) said, "**Jibril left me, and all sounds came to a halt. Then I heard my Lord's Words.**"

The Prescription of the Five Daily Prayers

At this lofty place, Allah gave Prophet Muhammad (PBBUH) the injunction of offering five prayers each day. The Lord (Glorified and Exalted be He) said, "**O Muhammad, they are five prayers each day and night. For every prayer there will be a tenfold reward, and that makes fifty prayers¹**" The Lord bestowed more of His gracious gifts, saying: "**Whoever intends to perform a good deed and does not do it will have a good deed recorded for them. If**

¹ Only five prayers in practice, but fifty in reward, because each good deed is rewarded tenfold by Allah (Exalted be He).

they perform it, it will be recorded for them as ten (good deeds). Whoever intends to commit an evil deed, but does not do it, will have nothing recorded against them. If they commit it, only one evil deed will be recorded against them.”

*Salah*¹ (Prayer) was thus the only obligatory act of worship that came straight from Allah to the Prophet (PBBUH), rather than being revealed through Angel Jibril (PBUH). This demonstrates the significance of daily prayers and the weight they carry, as prayer connects humans directly with their Gracious Maker.

After this great honor, the Prophet (PBBUH) began his return journey with Jibril (PBUH) through the heavens to earth, and then rode the Buraq from Jerusalem back to Makkah.

Some of the Scenes Witnessed by the Prophet (PBBUH) on the Night Journey and Ascension

1. During the journey, Prophet Muhammad (PBBUH) was offered milk and wine to drink, and he (PBBUH) chose milk. Jibril (PBUH) said to him: “You have chosen the *Fitrah* (the innate, natural disposition). If you had you chosen wine, your *Ummah* (followers) would have gone astray”

2. Prophet Muhammad (PBBUH) saw the punishment of those who wrongfully devoured the wealth of orphans; they had lips like those of camels. In their hands were pieces of fire, like stones. They thrust them into their mouths, and they came out of their posteriors.

3. Prophet Muhammad (PBBUH) saw those who committed adultery and fornication. They had delicious plump meat before them, beside which there was thin, stinking, and putrid meat; but they were only eating the nasty meat, while leaving the good meat untouched. [The good meat represents lawful spouses, as

¹ *Salah* derives from the Arabic word *Silah*, which means connection; because it connects the humans with their Maker and draws them closer to His Mercy.

opposed to adulterous and extramarital affairs].

4. Prophet Muhammad (PBBUH) saw women hanging by their breasts. These were the women who bore illegitimate children and attributed them to their lawful husbands.

5. Prophet Muhammad (PBBUH) saw caravans belonging to the people of the Quraysh on the route he had gone and come back by. They lost one of their camels and went out in search of it, and he (PBBUH) directed them to it. They also had with them water in a covered vessel, which the Prophet (PBBUH) uncovered, drank from, and replaced the cover as it was. The members of the caravan were extremely confused as to how the vessel remained covered yet became empty, although none of them drank from it or poured its contents away. [The Prophet's description of these events, all consistent with the account given by the members of this caravan on their arrival, would later attest to the truth of his journey.]

These are some of the scenes shown to the Prophet (PBBUH) during his two journeys across the earth and to the heavens, and there are several other awe-inspiring signs that are beyond the scope of this book.

The Return to Makkah

The Prophet (PBBUH) returned to Makkah before dawn and, shortly before daybreak. He (PBBUH) awakened the household of Umm Hani' bint Abu Talib to offer the *Subh* (Morning) Prayer.

After the Prophet (PBBUH) had prayed with the members of the household, he said, **“O Umm Hani’! I prayed the late Evening Prayer with you, as you have seen, in this valley (of Makkah). I then went to *Bait Al-Maqdis* and prayed there; and now I have (come back and) just prayed the *Subh* Prayer with you, as you have seen.”** Umm Hani' said, “O Prophet of Allah! Do not tell people this, lest they deny you and harm you.” He (PBBUH) said, **“By Allah, I shall tell it to them;”** and he (PBBUH) departed.

The Quraysh Denounce the Night Journey as False

The Prophet (PBBUH) reached the Sacred Sanctuary (surrounding the Holy Ka`bah) and sat near the Ka`bah. Abu Jahl walked past him and then sat down and mockingly asked him, "Has anything new happened?"

The Prophet (PBBUH) replied, "Yes."

Abu Jahl asked, "And what is it?"

He (PBBUH) replied, "I was taken on a journey last night."

Abu Jahl asked, "To where?"

He (PBBUH) replied, "To *Bait Al-Maqdis*."

Abu Jahl replied, "Then in the morning you woke up (here) among us?"

He (PBBUH) said, "Yes."

Recognizing this as a golden opportunity to discredit the Prophet (PBBUH), Abu Jahl said to him, "If I call your people, will you tell them what you have just told me?"

The Prophet (PBBUH) said, "Yes."

Abu Jahl called out, summoning the people, who immediately left their gatherings and joined them. Abu Jahl then said, "Tell your people what you have told me." Prophet Muhammad (PBBUH) told them that he was taken on a journey to Jerusalem by night.

The Quraysh were stunned to hear this, and immediately rejected the story, saying, "It takes us a month to go by camel to *Bait Al-Maqdis* and a month to return, yet you claim that you went there in one night! By Al-Lat and Al-`Uzza, we do not believe you!"

Abu Bakr Believes the Prophet (PBBUH)

Men flocked to the Prophet's (PBBUH) closest Companion, Abu Bakr, who up until then was known as Abu Bakr ibn Abu Quhafah.

When the men of the Quraysh came to his house and relayed to him what they had heard from the Prophet (PBBUH), Abu Bakr said, "Has he said so?" They said, "Yes!" He replied, "If he said so, he has told the truth. By Allah, I believe him in what is even more unbelievable than that. I believe that he receives information from heaven."

From that day onward, Abu Bakr was nicknamed Al-Siddiq (the Truth Affirmer and Adherent), owing to his unconditional belief in the Prophet (PBBUH) in this particular incident, when many others disbelieved him (PBBUH).

The Quraysh Challenges the Veracity of the Prophet's (PBBUH) Account

Abu Bakr left his house and hurried to the Prophet (PBBUH) at the Sacred Sanctuary to find him encircled by many Qurayshi pagans. They were charging him with falsehood. Abu Bakr (RA) defended him and bore witness that he (PBBUH) was truthful in what he said.

The Quraysh then made a direct challenge to the Prophet (PBBUH). They were certain that Prophet Muhammad (PBBUH) had never visited *Bait Al-Maqdis*, while in the Quraysh there were several men who had travelled to Jerusalem and seen Al-Aqsa Mosque. So, they demanded that the Prophet (PBBUH) describe *Bait Al-Maqdis* (i.e., Al-Aqsa Mosque) to them in detail.

They said to him, "O Muhammad! Describe *Bait Al-Maqdis* to us. What is its structure like? What is its shape? How close is it from the (surrounding) mountains?"

Describing Al-Aqsa Mosque

At this moment, Allah (Glorified be He) displayed a live image of *Bait Al-Maqdis* in front of the Prophet (PBBUH), seen only by him. He (PBBUH) looked at it and started describing to the Quraysh all the details of the Mosque. After giving them a meticulous description of *Bait Al-Maqdis*, the Quraysh could not continue and said, “You described it correctly.”

News of the Caravans

The Quraysh resorted to other challenges to discredit the Prophet’s (PBBUH) description. They said, “Tell us about our caravans. This is more important to us. Did you encounter any of them?” The Prophet (PBBUH) said, **“Yes, I came across the caravan of such-and-such a clan at a place called Al-Rawha. They had lost a camel and set off in search for it. They had among their luggage a (covered) cup of water. I felt thirsty, so I took it, drank it, and placed it back as it was. Ask them (when the men of the caravan come to you), did they find the (covered) cup full of water when they returned?”**

The Prophet (PBBUH) went on to provide accurate details about the caravan, the number of its camels and their condition, the day and time of its arrival in Makkah, and the direction from which it was expected to come (the mountain path of Al-Tan`im). The Prophet (PBBUH) also mentioned to them the load and color of the camel that would be at the forefront of the caravan – a grey camel carrying two sacks: one black and the other mixed with white.

On the day and time specified by the Prophet (PBBUH), the people rushed out to the mountain path of Al-Tan`im and, to their surprise, they met the caravan coming from Jerusalem in the specified direction, led by a grey camel loaded with two sacks with the same specified colors, just as the Prophet (PBBUH) had described to them. But although the Quraysh saw all this, with their eyes, and enquired about the rest of details given by the Prophet (PBBUH), such as the stray camel and the drinking vessel, and found the answers of the caravan

members confirming the description provided by the Prophet (PBBUH), the Quraysh still refused to believe him and dismissed this merely as exceptional magical powers.

The disbelievers of the Quraysh based their whole denial of the Prophet (PBBUH) on the standards prevalent at the time for traveling across the desert; according to them such a round trip from Makkah to Jerusalem, using camels, would take at least two months, and so it was unbelievable to them that this could all happen over one night. They were oblivious to the fact that the Creator's Power is beyond any knowledge that He (the Most Exalted) has chosen to give to His creation. Allah's Power has no limitations and is not subject to this life's natural dimensions.

Looking at our reality today, and the technology available to us, it is not inconceivable to fly between Makkah and Jerusalem in less than a day. A jet can travel this distance in less than two hours and a rocket can cover it in a matter of minutes. This would have been considered a miracle fourteen hundred years ago. And all this, so far, is just the extent of knowledge that humanity has been allowed to discover. Certainly, Allah can enable us to attain more than we ever thought possible... "And He (Allah) creates that which you do not know." (Al-Nahl 16:8)

Important Observations about the Prophet's (PBBUH) Night Journey and Ascension

Firstly: Spiritual Leadership for the Believers

Was Allah (Exalted be He) not able to take up His Prophet (PBBUH) directly from Makkah to the heavens without first going to *Bait Al-Maqdis*? Of course, Almighty Allah is Able to do anything. But there is wisdom in the Prophet (PBBUH) first travelling to *Bait Al-Maqdis*, and to be taken from there to the heavens.

The Prophet's (PBBUH) leadership of all previous Messengers and Prophets of Allah in prayer is a declaration that the spiritual leadership for the believers,

and humanity at large, will be handed over to Allah's Final Messenger, Muhammad (PBBUH). Allah (the Most High) combined for him the two focal points of the Ibrahimic (Abrahamic) message: *Bait Al-Maqdis* and *Bait Al-Haram* (Makkah), and thus the Prophet (PBBUH) truly became the Imam (Leader) of the Two *Qiblahs* (Jerusalem and Makkah).

Secondly: Special Honor for the Prophet (PBBUH)

This is the only time that Allah (Exalted be He) honored one of His creations by taking him through the heavens, in both body and soul, while he was still living this worldly life. This was truly a high degree of honor and glory conferred by Allah on His Prophet Muhammad (PBBUH), and indeed he was well deserving to be chosen for this special grace from Allah (the Most High).

We have seen how Prophet Ibrahim (Abraham PBBUH) asked his Lord (Exalted be He) to show him how He brings the dead to life so that his heart might rest assured. The Qur'an narrates it, saying: "And (remember) when Ibrahim said, 'My Lord! Show me how You give life to the dead.' He (Allah) said, 'Do you not believe?' He (Ibrahim) said, 'Yes (I believe), but to be stronger in faith.' He said, 'Take four birds, then cause them to incline towards you (then slaughter them, cut them into pieces), and then put a portion of them on every hill, and call them, they will come to you in haste. And know that Allah is All-Mighty, All-Wise.'" (Al-Baqarah 2:260)

Likewise, we have seen Prophet Musa (Moses PBBUH) asking Allah to allow him to see Him. Allah (Exalted be He) responded with the impossibility of human beings setting their eyes on Him. He (Blessed be He) explained to Musa (PBBUH) that no matter what the creature was, its body would not tolerate direct exposure to Him, the Creator (Glorified be He), as stated in the Qur'anic verse in which Allah says: "And when Musa (Moses) came at the time and place appointed by Us, and his Lord spoke to him, he said, 'O my Lord! Show me (Yourself), that I may look at You.' Allah said, 'You cannot see Me, but look at the mountain; if it stands still in its place, then you shall see Me.' So when his Lord appeared to the

mountain, He made it collapse to dust. And Musa (Moses) fell down unconscious. Then when he recovered his senses, he said, ‘Glory be to You, I turn to You in repentance and I am the first of the believers.’” (Al-A`raf 7:143)

`Isa (Jesus PBBUH) asked Allah (the Most Exalted) to send down a table spread with food from heaven so that his disciples could eat from it and their hearts be at rest regarding his prophethood. He (PBBUH) said, as quoted by the Qur’an: “O Allah, our Lord, send down to us a table (spread with food) from heaven to be for us a festival for the first of us and the last of us and a sign from You. And provide for us, for You are the Best of providers.” (Al-Ma`idah 5:114)

Muhammad (PBBUH), by contrast, never asked for a miraculous act from Allah or to see Him face-to-face (Exalted be He); nor did he seek more firmness and assurance of faith. Rather, his love for Allah was of a special and unique kind, almost unfathomable. It transcended the levels of surrender, contentment, and deep inner peace. Nothing ever seemed to ruffle the serenity and calmness of his mind except one thing: Allah’s Contentment and Satisfaction with him.

When he (PBBUH) was chased out of Al-Ta’if, hurt and wounded, he said, “**As long as You are not angry with me, I do not care (what happens to me).**” He (PBBUH) was repaid in kind by the outpouring of Allah’s Grace upon him. The Prophet’s (PBBUH) prayers and requests were granted without asking, and he obtained what the previous prophets had sought.

The miraculous Night Journey and Ascension was a gift from Allah (praised be He) to his beloved Prophet Muhammed (PBBUH), as though to remind the Prophet (PBBUH), while he was going through hardships in Makkah, that His Kingdom was much bigger than the Quraysh, Al-Ta’if, and the whole Arabian Peninsula.

Allah (the Majestic) showed His Prophet (PBBUH) that not just human beings believed in him, but also unseen beings (the Jinn) listened to him and believed in his message. In *Bait Al-Maqdis*, Allah honored him (PBBUH) by

making him lead all previous prophets in prayer. Then He (the Supreme King) raised him to the infinitely higher and vaster realms of the heavens, until the Prophet (PBBUH) reached *Sidrat Al-Muntaha* (the Lote-Tree of the Utmost Boundary), near which lies the Garden of Eternal Abode.

Thirdly: The Night Journey and Ascension in Both Body and Soul

Some scholars have claimed that the Night Journey and Ascension occurred only with the soul, and not with the body. Actually, it occurred in real life with both the body and soul. If it were only with the soul, that is, during sleep, the Qurayshi disbelievers would not have opposed or challenged the Prophet (PBBUH). It would have been perfectly plausible in their eyes, as all sort of strange things could happen to humans when they dreamed. But the fact that the disbelievers furiously discredited the Prophet's (PBBUH) story and his description of *Bait Al-Maqdis* and the caravan he (PBBUH) had passed by on his way to Makkah proves that it was a journey taken in the real world, in body and soul, and not only a vision.

Islam Finds Light Outside Makkah

Some people believed in the incident of the Miraculous Night Journey and Ascension and some denied it. Regardless, the Prophet (PBBUH) persevered in his mission to spread Islam, but it had reached saturation point and the message was moving in a closed circle. Everyone in Makkah had heard about Islam, so the Prophet (PBBUH) began to invite tribes and people from outside Makkah. Their responses varied greatly, from ungracious refusal to total unconditional faith in the message. Several individual men to whom the Prophet (PBBUH) offered Islam believed in him; they formed the core of the first Muslim group among their people and tribes. Below is a glimpse of some of these men:

1. Suwaid ibn Al-Samit

Suwaid ibn Al-Samit was a dignitary of Yathrib (later to be called Madinah) and a very intelligent poet. He memorized many wise sayings, and his people called him Al-Kamil (the Complete Man), due to his steadfast strength, poetry, honor, and good lineage.

When Suwaid went on a pilgrimage to Makkah, the Prophet (PBBUH) invited him to Islam. Suwaid said to the Prophet (PBBUH), “Perhaps what you have is similar to what I have?” The Prophet (PBBUH) asked him, **“And what do you have?”** Suwaid said, “Luqman’s Wisdom.” The Prophet (PBBUH) said, **“Present it to me.”** After Suwaid presented it to him, the Prophet (PBBUH) said, **“These are good words, yet what I have is better than this. It is the Qur’an that Allah has revealed to me. It is guidance and light.”**

The Prophet (PBBUH) then recited the Noble Qur’an to Suwaid and called him to accept Islam. Suwaid listened attentively and was greatly affected by what he heard. He said, “This indeed is a good speech,” and he embraced Islam. He was the first in Yathrib to embrace Islam, but he was killed shortly thereafter in a battle that occurred between the two feuding tribes of Al-Aws and Al-Khazraj

(the two main resident tribes of Yathrib).

2. Iyas ibn Mu`adh

Iyas was a youth from Yathrib. He came to Makkah as a member of a delegation from Al-Aws seeking alliance with the Quraysh against the rival tribe of Al-Khazraj, as the Al-Aws were inferior in number compared to Al-Khazraj.

When the Prophet (PBBUH) learned of the coming of Al-Aws delegation, he came and sat with them, and said, **“Shall I inform you of something better than what you have come for?”**

They asked, “What is it?”

The Prophet (PBBUH) replied, **“I am the Messenger of Allah. He has sent me to the people to call them to worship Allah alone and not to associate anything with Him. And He has revealed the (Holy) Book to me.”** He (PBBUH) then told them about Islam and recited a portion of the Qur’an to them.

Iyas ibn Mu`adh said in response, “O my people! By Allah, this is indeed better than what you have come for.” Upon that, their elder, Abul-Haysar Anas ibn Rafi`, grasped a handful of sand and flung it right in Iyas’s face and said, “Enough of that. By my life, we have not come here for this (purpose).” Iyas remained silent and the Prophet (PBBUH) left the gathering.

Following their return to Yathrib, Iyas was killed in the civil Battle of Bu`ath that took place between Al-Aws and Al-Khazraj. He reportedly died a Muslim.

3. Abu Dhar Al-Ghifari

Abu Dhar was a man from the tribe of Ghifar. He heard about the emergence of a Prophet in Makkah and sent his brother to talk with him and bring him more news about him.

His brother set out to Makkah, met the Prophet (PBBUH), and returned. He then briefed his brother, saying, “By Allah, I saw a man who enjoins people to do good and refrain from evil.” Abu Dhar said, “You have not satisfied me with this information,” and he decided to go himself to Makkah.

When Abu Dhar arrived, he stayed in the Sacred Mosque and avoided asking anyone about the Prophet (PBBUH). `Ali ibn Abu Talib passed by him and said, “It seems you are a stranger (to this town).”

Abu Dhar said, “Yes.”

`Ali said, “Let us go to my house.” `Ali (RA) invited him to his house for lodging and did not ask him any questions. It was customary in Arab culture for hosts not to ask their lodgers about anything for three full days, as a sign of hospitality and to avoid embarrassing or inconveniencing their guests.

The next morning, Abu Dhar returned to the Sacred Mosque to ask about the Prophet (PBBUH), but no one told him anything. `Ali (RA) again walked by him and asked him, “Has the man not yet recognized his dwelling place?” as a kind way of inviting him over to his house, and he accommodated him for a second night.

It was not until the third night that `Ali asked him, “What has brought you to this town?” Abu Dhar replied, “I shall tell you if you will keep my secret.” `Ali said, “I will,” and Abu Dhar told him the reason he had come and his wish to meet the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH).

Much to Abu Dhar’s delight, he had come to the right person and `Ali (RA) led him to the Prophet (PBBUH). Abu Dhar said, “Present (the principles of) Islam to me.” The Prophet (PBBUH) did, and Abu Dhar embraced Islam immediately.

The Prophet (PBBUH) then said to him, **“O Abu Dhar, conceal this matter and go back to your town; and when you hear that we have begun to prevail,**

come (and join us):” Abu Dhar replied, “By the One Who has sent you with the Truth, I will shout it out (my conversion to Islam) publicly among them.”

Abu Dhar did it; he went to the Mosque, where some men from the Quraysh were present, and announced, “O people of the Quraysh! I testify that there no god but Allah, and I testify that Muhammad is His Servant and Messenger.” The people began beating him and only stopped when Al-`Abbas (the Prophet’s uncle who had not yet entered Islam) intervened by throwing himself over him to protect him and saying to them, “Woe to you! Do you want to kill a man from Ghifar, when your trade route passes through (the territory of) Ghifar?” So they left him. In this way, Abu Dhar became the reason that Islam spread among Ghifar and the neighboring areas.

4. Tufayl ibn `Amr Al-Dawsi

Tufayl was a distinguished, honorable man, a brilliant poet, and the chief of the Daws tribe. When he came to Makkah, the people gave him a gracious welcome and showed him a great deal of respect.

The Quraysh then pressingly warned him against the Prophet (PBBUH). They said, “O Tufayl, you have come to our land and there is this man among us who is getting stronger. He has divided our community. His words are like sorcery..” They thus stirred in him a fear and dislike of talking with or listening to the Prophet (PBBUH).

At first, Tufayl was prevailed upon to avoid the Prophet (PBBUH). He even went to the extent of going to the Sacred Sanctuary the next day with cotton stuffed in his ears as a precaution against the Prophet’s (PBBUH) preaching. But when Tufayl entered the Sacred Mosque and saw the Prophet (PBBUH) deep in prayer at the Ka`bah, he stood near him and could not resist listening to the Qur’an the Prophet (PBBUH) was reciting. He felt drawn to the holy words and said to himself, “By Allah, I am an intelligent man and poet. I can distinguish the good from the ugly. What should prevent me from listening to what this man is

saying? If what he says is good, I shall accept it; and if it is ugly, I shall ignore it.”

And so Tufayl went against the Quraysh’s warnings and listened to the Prophet’s (PBBUH) recitation. He waited until the Prophet (PBBUH) had finished and followed him to his home, entered his house, and told him what had happened to him since he arrived in Makkah; how the Quraysh kept cautioning him against him (PBBUH), how he could not help but listen to him, and his amazement at the goodness of the words he heard him reciting.

Tufayl then asked the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) to explain Islam to him. “Present to me your matter,” he said. After the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) presented Islam and recited the Qur’an to him, Tufayl embraced Islam and uttered the testimony of faith.

Tufayl then said, “O Prophet of Allah, I am a man who is obeyed among my people. I will go back to them and call them to Islam. Please supplicate to Allah to provide me with a sign (that will help me in inviting them to Islam).” The Prophet (PBBUH) supplicated for him, and Allah granted him a light like a lamp. He first offered Islam to his father and wife, and they became Muslims. He carried on in his efforts until, at length, seventy or eighty families from his tribe accepted Islam.

5. Dimad Al-Azdi

Dimad was from the tribe of Azad in Yemen. He used to cure people from evil enchantment and possession, and such sorts of illnesses. When He came to Makkah, he heard some foolish people describing the Prophet (PBBUH) as a madman, and he thought he could possibly heal him.

Dimad met with the Prophet (PBBUH) and said to him, “O Muhammad, I use incantations to (drive out) such mental illness. Would you like me to treat you?” The Prophet (PBBUH) replied, “**All praise be to Allah. We praise Him and seek His Help. Whomever Allah guides cannot be misled, and whomever He lets go astray cannot be guided. I bear witness that there is no**

god except Allah, and I bear witness that Muhammad is His Servant and Messenger.”

Dimad did not let the Prophet (PBBUH) complete his speech, and, impressed, he said, “Repeat your words to me,” and the Prophet (PBBUH), at his request, repeated them three times slowly. Dimad said, after hearing them eagerly, “I have indeed heard the words of soothsayers, magicians, and poets, yet I have never heard words similar to yours before. Give me your hand to pledge my allegiance to you for Islam.”

Like his fellows who became Muslim from outside Makkah, Dimad acted as a catalyst for the expansion of Islam among his people.

Bright and Promising Souls from Yathrib

During the Hajj season of the eleventh year of prophethood, the call to Islam found some good saplings that would eventually evolve into towering trees. A group of six youths, all of them from Al-Khazraj tribe, came to Makkah. The Prophet (PBBUH) met with them and spoke to them about Islam.

The meeting took place at night, as it had become the Prophet’s (PBBUH) wise practice to come out and present Islam to the tribes at night, away from the eyes of the Quraysh.

After talking with them, the Prophet (PBBUH) learned that they were allies of Jewish tribes that lived adjacent to them. Every time there was a conflict between them, the Jews of Yathrib (who were People of the Book and had knowledge of the scriptures) would say to them, “The time draws near when a prophet shall be sent. We will follow him, and we, along with him, will kill you as the people of `Ad and Iram were killed.”

After the Prophet (PBBUH) called the group of youths to Allah (the Most Compassionate) and recited the Holy Qur’an to them, they recognized who he

was and said to one another, “You know, by Allah, O people this is the Prophet whom the Jews threaten you with. Do not let them precede you in following him.”

The six youths promptly responded to the Prophet’s (PBBUH) call and embraced Islam. They then said to the Prophet (PBBUH), “We have left our people behind (at homeland), and there are no people who are more divided by enmity and evil. May Allah bring them together through you. We shall go to them and call them to your matter. We shall present to them this religion that we have responded to. If Allah unites them in it, no man will be stronger and more honorable than you.”

The six young men returned to Yathrib and carried the message of Islam to the whole town, until it was on every tongue, in every household of Al-Aws and Khazraj.

First Pledge of Al-`Aqabah

One year had elapsed since the first meeting with the six youths, and at the beginning of the new Hajj season, during the twelfth year of prophethood, another group of twelve men from Yathrib came to Makkah. Five of them were among the six that had met with the Prophet (PBBUH) the year before at Al-`Aqabah near Mina, where they swore a pact of allegiance to him.

This pact of allegiance became known as the First Pledge of Al-`Aqabah, in which the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) requested the six youths to, **“Come and give me your pledge of allegiance that you will not associate anything with Allah, that you will not steal, that you will not commit *Zina* (sexual intercourse outside marriage), that you will not kill your children, that you will not bring forth falsehood that you fabricate between your hands and your feet (i.e., intentionally forge falsehood), and that you will not disobey me in anything good (I ask you to do). Whoever among you fulfils this pledge, his reward will be due from Allah. Whoever commits any of these sins and is punished for it in this world, this will be his expiation. Whoever commits any of these sins and Allah conceals it for him (from people), his matter will rest with Allah. If He wills, He will punish him; and if He wills, He will pardon him.”** The company of youths gave the Prophet (PBBUH) their oath of allegiance on that basis.

Islam’s First Ambassador

After taking the pledge of allegiance and the end of the Hajj season, the Prophet (PBBUH) sent the first ambassador of Islam back to Yathrib with the group of Yathribite believers.

The ambassador’s assignment comprised educating the new Muslims of Yathrib on the laws of Islam and how to recite the Qur’an, providing people with

a good comprehension of their religion, and spreading the message of Islam and the belief in Allah's Oneness among other inhabitants, who were largely idol worshippers.

Chosen for this mission was Mus`ab ibn `Umair, one of the first to embrace Islam.

Spreading Islam in Yathrib (later Madinah)

Mus`ab had a kind, wise, soft, and eloquent way of inviting people to Islam, and such qualities qualified him in the eyes of Prophet Muhammad (PBBUH) for this challenging task.

Mus`ab used to talk to people and recite parts of the Qur'an to them, and so the Yathrib community came to know him as *Al-Muqri'* (the Reciter) for his beautiful and heart-melting recitations.

As`ad ibn Zurarah: The Centre of the Islamic Call in Yathrib

Mus`ab was hosted by As`ad ibn Zurarah, and they both actively worked to spread and preach Islam throughout Yathrib. Together they gave the message a remarkable boost and collected one success after another. Across Yathrib, the Islamic call to the worship of the One True God began to resonate with the hearts and souls of people.

Chief Sa`d ibn Mu`adh and His Clan Entering Islam

One day, As`ad ibn Zurarah took Mus`ab ibn `Umair to the neighborhood of Banu `Abd Al-Ashhal. The two sat near a well called Maraq, with some Muslim men gathered around them.

Sa`d ibn Mu`adh and Usaid ibn Hudair were the chieftains of the subtribe of Banu `Abd Al-Ashhal and both were polytheists. When they heard of the arrival of As`ad and Mus`ab and that they were sitting at the well and calling

people to Islam, Sa`d ibn Mu`adh said to Usaid ibn Hudair, "Go to these two men (referring to Mus`ab and As`ad) who have come to our quarter to deceive our weaker members. Drive them off and forbid them from returning to our quarter. As`ad is my maternal cousin as you know; and, were it not for that, I would have dealt with the matter myself."

Usaid took his spear and went to them. He addressed them in a tough, insulting manner, and accused them of misleading their people. Calmly and confidently, Mus`ab said to him, "Why do you not sit down and listen? If you like the matter, accept it; and if you dislike it, we will stop talking about what you dislike."

Usaid replied, "You have spoken fairly," and he planted his spear in the ground and sat down with them. As Mus`ab spoke to him about Islam and recited some passages of the Qur'an to him, Usaid's expression slowly began to change. His acceptance of the message of Islam was evident on his face, which became radiant and relaxed, even before he uttered a word in response.

When Mus`ab had finished speaking, Usaid said to them, "How excellent and beautiful is this! What do you do when you want to enter this religion?" They told him, "Take a bath and purify yourself and your garment, then bear witness to the testimony of truth, and then pray (two *Rak`ahs*)."

Usaid did exactly as he was instructed. Then he drew his spear out of the ground and headed back to Sa`d and his people, who were sitting in their assembly.

On seeing Usaid approach, Sa`d could sense that some change had occurred in him, and he said to those sitting with him, "I swear by Allah, Usaid is coming back to you with a different face to the one he left with (a while ago)." When Usaid reached the assembly, Sa`d asked him, "What did you do?" He replied, "I spoke to the two men, and by Allah, I did not find anything harmful about them."

Sa`d rose in anger, picked up his spear, and headed towards As`ad ibn Zurarah and Mus`ab ibn `Umair. As As`ad saw him approaching, he said to Mus`ab, "By Allah, coming to you now is a chief whose people closely follow him. Should he follow you, none of them will stay behind." Mus`ab said to Sa`d, "Why do you not sit down and listen?" and he repeated what he had said to Usaid. Sa`d responded to him in the same way as Usaid, and he embraced Islam.

Thus, Sa`d ibn Mu`adh, the chief of Banu `Abd Al-Ashhal, became Muslim.

After Sa`d had taken a bath, purified himself and his clothes, pronounced the testimony of faith, and prayed, he went directly back to his people's assembly place. When his people saw him coming, they said, "We swear by Allah, Sa`d has returned to you with a different face to the one he left with (a while ago)."

Sa`d stood before his people and said, "O Banu `Abd Al-Ashhal! What do you consider to be my status among you?"

They replied, "You are our leader and the man with the best judgment among us." Sa`d said, "It is forbidden for me to speak to any man or woman among you until you believe in Allah and His Messenger."

By the evening of that day, there was not a man or a woman in the dwellings of Banu `Abd Al-Ashhal who had not accepted Islam.

`Amr ibn Al-Jamuh

Mus`ab persevered in his call to Islam until every household in Yathrib had at least one Muslim man or woman under its roof. The Muslims increased in number as well as in depth of faith, and gained a level of power that allowed them to trifle with the personal idols that their folks kept in their houses.

The leader of Banu Salmah, `Amr ibn Al-Jamuh, had in his house a special wooden idol called Manat, which he used for private worship – as many of the dignitaries did in those times. `Amr did not accept the concept of One God and remained committed to his polytheistic religion. To show him that his beliefs

were palpably false and ludicrous, and could easily be disproved, two young men of his household, said to be his son Mu`adh ibn `Amr and his friend Mu`adh ibn Jabal, began to take away his idol every night and dump it head first into a filthy pit, which people used as a place to relieve themselves.

`Amr would wake up every morning and frantically search for his missing idol, only to find it head down among the refuse and filth. He would then clean it, perfume it, and put it back in its place. For the next nights, the two young men repeated the same act against his idol. Each time, upon waking from sleep, `Amr would remove it from the rubbish pit, wash and anoint it, then put it back. Eventually, `Amr got fed up, and one time, he put a sword around the idol's neck and said to it, "If there is any good (power) in you, you should defend yourself. Here is a sword for you!"

The next morning when he went out in search of his idol, he found it thrown into a well with a dead dog's carcass tied to it and no sign of the sword. Seeing this for himself, `Amr finally realized the folly and futility of idolatry and *Shirk* (associating false gods with Allah).

Now that `Amr had matured in his beliefs and became more acceptable of the idea of Islam, the Muslims of his tribe spoke to him, and he embraced Islam.

Second Pledge of Al-`Aqabah

A year went by, during which the Muslims in Yathrib continued to increase in number and strength. They started to think about their fellow Muslims in Makkah who were living oppressed, defenseless, and vulnerable, while in Yathrib the Muslims were enjoying the privileges of freedom, power, and the ability to practice their faith without restriction or persecution.

So the Yathribite Muslims asked themselves the question: For how long will we leave the Messenger (PBBUH) and his Muslim companions wandering around the mountains of Makkah because of the injustice, oppression, and hostility practiced against them?

It was the thirteenth year of prophethood, and with the arrival of the Hajj season, Mus`ab ibn `Umair came back to Makkah from Yathrib. He was accompanied by seventy-five Muslims (seventy-three men and two women) in a caravan, together with the year's polytheist pilgrims of Al-Aws and Al-Khazraj.

The Prophet (PBBUH) had already been informed by Mus`ab of the progress and flourishing situation of Islam in Yathrib, and so he (PBBUH) considered a second pledge. It would build upon the current strong position and aim beyond the confines of the first pledge – not only calling people to Islam with patience and forbearance, as the Prophet (PBBUH) had done for the past thirteen years, while enduring great hardships, sacrifices, and pains to achieve that goal – but also to form an alliance that would allow Muslims to be free and protected from any harm or assault devised or exercised against them.

Taking Precaution and Preparing for the Meeting

Secret communications took place between the leaders of the Muslim delegation from Yathrib and the Prophet (PBBUH), and they agreed to meet him

late at night near Al-`Aqabah on the second day of Al-Tashriq¹.

The Yathribite delegates took appropriate steps to preserve the secrecy of their meeting from the Makkan pagans. When one-third of the night had elapsed, they left their encampment and went out stealthily, alone or in pairs, until they all arrived at the appointed place. They waited for the arrival of the Message Bearer (PBBUH) in the mountain pass at Al-`Aqabah.

The Meeting Commences and Al-`Abbas Expresses Apprehensions

The Prophet (PBBUH) soon arrived, accompanied by his paternal uncle Al-`Abbas ibn Abdul-Muttalib who, though still an adherent of the idolatrous religion of his forefathers (i.e., not yet a Muslim), was concerned for his nephew's welfare and came along to attend the pledge and verify its earnestness.

Al-`Abbas was the first to speak and said, "O assembly of Khazraj². You all know the (esteemed) position that Muhammad holds among us. We have protected him against those of our people who have the same opinion as us about him (i.e., who do not believe in him). He is honored by his people (Banu Hashim) and well-defended in his city. But he refuses to be on any side but yours and to join you (your city). If you think you can fulfil that which you have called him to and can defend him against his opponents, assume the responsibility that you have taken. But if you think that you will turn him over to his enemies and betray him after he has emigrated to you, then leave him from now; for he enjoys honor and protection among his people and in his city."

Al-`Abbas's passionate speech stemmed from clan loyalty and blood ties, in contrast to the Muslims from Yathrib who were motivated by totally different considerations and commitments. They just overlooked what Al-`Abbas said, as

¹ The Days of Tashriq are the 11th, 12th, and 13th of Dhul-Hijjah.

² The Arabs used to refer to all Yathribites as Khazraj. Even though Al-Aws and Al-Khazraj were the two principal tribes in Yathrib, when addressed together, they would be called Khazraj.

he was not a follower of their religion and could not understand the nature of the bond that connected them with the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH). It was a bond that transcended any tribal or blood connections. What they had was the bond of faith and true brotherhood for Allah's Sake.

To present their position, a man from Yathrib's delegates stood up and said, "We have heard what you (O Al-'Abbas) have said, and now O Messenger of Allah, it is for you to speak and take from us any pledge that you like for yourself and your Lord." The people from Yathrib spoke with a level of determination, courage, and dedication that showed how fully prepared they were to take on this great responsibility and bear its serious consequences.

The Conditions of the Second Pledge

The Prophet (PBBUH) began to speak. He (PBBUH) recited some Qur'anic verses, called the people to Allah (Exalted be He), exhorted them to Islam, and then said:

Pledge to me that:

- 1. You will hear and obey in times of activeness and in times of laziness (tiredness).**
- 2. You will spend in times of difficulty and in times of ease.**
- 3. You will enjoin good and forbid evil.**
- 4. You will stand in Allah's Cause without fearing anyone's censure.**
- 5. You will support me if I come to you and protect me from all that you would protect yourselves, your wives, and your children from.**

The first reaction came from Al-Bara' ibn Ma`rur. He enthusiastically took the Prophet (PBBUH) by the hand and said, "Yes, by the One Who has sent you with the Truth, we will protect you from that which we would protect our women and our own selves from. Accept our pledge of allegiance, O Messenger of Allah.

By Allah, we are sons of war and people of arms (i.e., quite reliable fighters and strivers), a characteristic that we inherited from ancestor after ancestor.”

Before Al-Bara’ had finished his words, Abul-Haytham ibn Al-Tayyihan cut his speech off and asked, “O Messenger of Allah, we have covenants between us and the people (meaning the Jews), and we are about to break them (by following you). If we do this and then Allah grants you victory, would you perhaps leave us and return to your people?”

The Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) smiled and replied, **“Rather, your blood is my blood, and your destruction is my destruction (i.e., my home is where you stay). I am of you, and you are of me. I shall fight those whom you fight and make peace with those whom you make peace with.”**

Impressing on the Pledge-Takers the Gravity of their Pledge

The Yathribite delegates were about to rise and make the pledge of allegiance when Al-`Abbas ibn `Ubadah interrupted and said, “O assembly of Khazraj! Do you realize for what you are about to pledge allegiance to this man? You are about to give him a pledge of allegiance to fight the red and black among people (i.e., the Arabs and non-Arabs). If you think (fear) that, should your wealth get destroyed and your chiefs get killed (in the process), you may forsake him, then leave him now; because, by Allah, if you do this (after the pledge), it will be a disgrace upon you in both this world and the Hereafter. But if you think you will fulfill the promise you make, despite the destruction of your property and the killing of your chiefs, then take him; for he is, by Allah, the best for you in both this world and the Hereafter.”

The Yathribites responded to his speech by saying, “We shall follow him even at the cost of the loss of our wealth and the killing of our chiefs.”

They then turned to the Prophet (PBBUH) and asked, “Tell us, O Messenger of Allah, what will be our reward if we fulfill this (pledge)?”

With assurance, the Prophet (PBBUH) replied, **“Paradise.”**

Swearing the Pledge

The Yathribites asked the Prophet (PBBUH) to stretch out his hand, and they all stretched out their hands and took the pledge.

The youngest of the delegates, As`ad ibn Zurarah, was the first to put out his hand and take the oath, and then everyone else took the oath. The two women present took the oath without shaking hands. That was the Second `Aqabah Pledge.

Twelve Representatives

Immediately after the pledge was taken, the Prophet (PBBUH) started the implementation of its articles and the organization of the roles that the delegates had to perform. He (PBBUH) said, “Bring forth for me twelve leaders (or representatives) from among you who will be responsible for their people.”

They selected twelve leaders from among them, nine men from Al-Khazraj and three from Al-Aws. The Prophet (PBBUH) took another pledge from the elected men; this one was for their responsibility as leaders. He (PBBUH) addressed them, saying, “You are the guarantors of your people, just as the disciples were guarantors of theirs before `Isa (Jesus PBBUH), son of Maryam (Mary PBUH). I, for my part, am the guarantor of my people (meaning all Muslims).”

A Devil Exposes the Meeting

The entire meeting with the Prophet (PBBUH) took place in the middle of the night, in complete secrecy, at the mountain pass near Al-`Aqabah. All the delegates had sworn their pledge and were about to leave, when a piercing voice cried out from the summit of Al-`Aqabah, “O inhabitants of the dwellings! Beware! *Muzammam* (a disparaging name for Muhammad PBBUH) and the apostates, who are with him, have agreed to make war on you.” The Prophet

(PBBUH) identified him to be a devil who stealthily overheard them, and he (PBBUH) ordered the gathering to disperse.

On hearing that devil's voice Al-`Abbas ibn `Ubadah said to the Prophet (PBBUH), "By Allah Who has sent you with the truth, if you wish, we shall attack the people of Mina (the Quraysh) tomorrow with our swords." The Prophet (PBBUH) replied, "We have not been commanded to do so. Return to your camps." They went back and slept till morning.

The Quraysh Protests

The news of the secret meeting at Al-`Aqabah spread. It was a huge strategic blow for the Quraysh and raised high alarm among them. They understood too well the serious repercussions that this allegiance could have on their trade, their position, and their interests.

In the morning, a large group of Makkani leaders went to the camp of the Yathribites to protest against what had occurred. They said, "O people of Khazraj! We have been informed that you have come to take this Companion of ours (Muhammad PBBUH) from among us and to swear an oath of allegiance to him to wage war against us. By Allah, there is no tribe among the Arabs that we would hate to be at war with more than you."

The polytheist Yathribite pilgrims, who were totally unaware of the secret meeting and the pledge taken during the previous night, swore by Allah that no such thing had happened and that they knew nothing about it. As for the Muslim Yathribites, they just exchanged looks and kept silent.

The Makkans, although not fully satisfied, inclined towards believing the polytheist Yathribites. However, they kept investigating the matter.

The Quraysh Pursue Al-`Aqabah Pledgers

The Quraysh found out too late that the rumor about the pledge of Al-`Aqabah was true. The Yathribite pilgrims were already on their way back to their

homeland. The Qurayshi horsemen set off in pursuit of them and could not catch up with any of them except Sa`d ibn `Ubadah.

They tied Sa`d's hands behind his neck and brought him back to Makkah, beating and dragging him along the length of the path. They proceeded to torture him until two Qurayshi men, Jubair ibn Mut`im ibn `Adi and Al-Harith ibn Harb ibn Umayyah, interceded on his behalf and extended protection to him because Sa`d used to secure their trading caravans as they passed through Yathrib on their way to Al-Sham.

Just when the Yathribites were turning back to negotiate his release, Sa`d showed up and rejoined them on the way.

The whole group returned to Yathrib safely.

Emigration to Yathrib (Hijrah)

The First Groups of Emigrants

After the conclusion of the Second Pledge of `Al-Aqabah and the successful establishment of a new state for the Muslims, the Prophet (PBBUH) ordered his Companions to commence emigrating to Yathrib, but in small, separate groups so as not to arouse suspicion among the Quraysh.

Steadily, all the Muslims started leaving their homes in Makkah and emigrating to Yathrib individually or in small groups.

Aggression of the Quraysh Met with Sacrifices from the Emigrants

The Quraysh soon noticed the developments happening and did everything in their power to prevent the Muslims from emigrating. They put obstacles in their path and subjected them to trials and persecution to alienate them from their religion.

Following are some of the tactics that the Quraysh used to impede the emigration attempts of the Muslims:

1. Abu Salamah and His Wife Umm Salamah

Abu Salamah was the first to emigrate. When he resolved to set out, he loaded his camel with provisions and helped his wife and son onto it. On hearing of his departure, his wife's family decided not to let her go. They said to Abu Salamah, "You have gone against our wish regarding yourself (we have no authority over you), but what about this female relative of ours (your wife)? Why should we leave you roaming about the land with her?" And they took Umm Salamah away from him.

Abu Salamah's kinsfolk, Banu `Abdul-Asad, heard what had happened and got angry for their kinsman. They said, "By Allah, we will not leave our child (Salamah) with her, since you have separated her from our relative."

The men of the two clans started pulling her son back and forth between them until they dislocated his arm. Her son ended up being taken away by Abu Salamah's kinsfolk, and Abu Salamah made the journey to Yathrib alone, leaving his wife and child behind in Makkah.

For about a year, Umm Salamah would go out every morning and sit in the valley of Makkah, weeping till the evening. Then one day, moved by pity, her people agreed to let her go and join her husband and she was given back her son. She and her son had to undertake the long, arduous journey to Yathrib alone, where she finally reconnected with her husband.

2. Suhayb ibn Sinan Al-Rumi

Suhayb was not a native of Makkah; he was captured and sold into slavery while he was still a little boy. As he grew up, he was bought and sold many times until he came to Makkah, where he was eventually freed. When he decided to emigrate, the disbelievers of the Quraysh objected, saying to him, "You came to us poor and wretched, then you grew in wealth among us. Now you wish to get out with your soul and all your wealth. By Allah, this shall never be!"

Suhayb replied, "What would you say if I leave you my wealth? Would you get out of my way?"

They replied, "Yes."

Suhayb said, "I give you all my wealth."

When the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) heard what Suhayb had done, he said, "**Suhayb has won! Suhayb has won!**"

3. Umar ibn Al-Khattab, joined by the Oppressed Muslims

All Muslim emigrants left Makkah secretly, except `Umar ibn Al-Khattab (RA). When he decided to emigrate, he strapped on his sword and headed towards the Ka`bah, where the chiefs of the Quraysh used to gather in the courtyard. He circumambulated the Ka`bah seven times, prayed two *Ra`kabs*, then approached their circle and said to them, “Whoever wishes to bereave his mother, make his child fatherless and his wife a widow, let him meet me behind this valley (i.e., I am emigrating).”

Everybody heard `Umar, and not a single member of the Quraysh dared follow him (RA). Rather, a group of weak Muslims followed him. Among them were his sister Fatimah and her husband Sa`id ibn Zaid, `Ayyash ibn Abu Rabi`ah, Hisham ibn Al-`As ibn Wa`il and several other Muslims.

4. `Ayyash ibn Abu Rabi`ah

When `Ayyash and `Umar (RA) arrived in Yathrib, they stayed at Quba, where they were caught up with by Abu Jahl ibn Hisham and Al-Harith ibn Hisham. They had set out in pursuit of `Ayyash ibn Rabi`ah, who was their paternal cousin and half-brother from their mother’s side.

They got to `Ayyash and `Umar, and they said to `Ayyash, “Your mother has vowed not to comb her hair nor take shade from the sun until she sees you.”

What they said aroused `Ayyash’s compassion for his mother, but `Umar warned him, saying, “O `Ayyash, by Allah, your people only want to tempt you away from your religion, beware of them. By Allah, if lice were to harm your mother, she would comb her hair. And if the heat of Makkah became intense for her, she would seek shade.”

Despite being warned, `Ayyash decided to return with them and fulfil his mother’s vow. `Umar, seeing that `Ayyash insisted on going back to Makkah, said to him, “If you must go, take this she-camel of mine. It is well-bred and obedient.

Remain firm upon its back, and if (at any stage) you suspect them of treachery, escape on its back.”

On the road, after riding for some distance, Abu Jahl said to `Ayyash, “I find my camel too difficult to ride. Would you not let me mount behind you on this she-camel of yours? `Ayyash agreed, and as they made their camels kneel to the ground to make the change, Abu Jahl and Al-Harith attacked `Ayyash and tied him up. They entered Makkah with him tied up, and they addressed the Quraysh, saying, “O people of Makkah! This is the way you should deal with your fools, just as we dealt with this fool of ours.”

These were some of the impediments placed by the Quraysh to hinder the Muslims who wanted to emigrate and practice their faith. But despite every obstacle thrown at them, successive groups of Muslim emigrants continued to arrive in Yathrib.

The Prophet (PBBUH) remained in Makkah. It was unknown whether he intended to stay or was planning to emigrate. He had in the past asked some of his Companions to go to Abyssinia while he stayed in Makkah, inviting its people to Islam. So the Prophet’s (PBBUH) decision remained confidential.

After two months from the Second Pledge of Al-`Aqabah, no Muslims remained in Makkah except for the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH), Abu Bakr (RA), `Ali ibn Abu Talib (RA), and some oppressed Muslims who had been detained or imprisoned by their polytheist relatives or masters.

Both Abu Bakr and `Ali stayed in Makkah by the command of the Prophet (PBBUH). When Abu Bakr sought permission from the Prophet (PBBUH) to emigrate, he (PBBUH) said to him, “**Do not be in haste. Perhaps Allah will grant you a companion (to emigrate with).**” In preparation for the anticipated journey, Abu Bakr bought two camels and kept them tied up and well fed in his house. `Ali was also told by the Prophet (PBBUH) to stay in Makkah for a reason that shall become apparent later.

The Prophet's (PBBUH) Emigration

The Prophetic Hijrah offers us countless lessons and pieces of wisdom. The Prophet's (PBBUH) genius mind, guided by inspirations from Allah, is most manifest in this journey.

It is evident in his deliberation, careful planning, and efficient use of available means until the successful achievement of this decisive step in the history of Islam and the doctrine of sole worship of Allah, the Almighty. It was indeed a pivotal journey that forever changed the course of Islam and moved it from a local to a regional and global level. We should try to learn as much as we can from it.

The Quraysh's Heightened Concerns About the Prophet's (PBBUH) Imminent Departure

The Quraysh were feeling seriously threatened due to the daily increase of Muhammad's (PBBUH) followers in Yathrib and the strength they were gathering in the city, where they had almost taken the upper hand.

The Prophet's (PBBUH) Makkan Companions were also emigrating and joining the Yathribite supporters of Islam, which meant more power to the Muslims.

If, in addition, they were joined by the Prophet (PBBUH), whom the Quraysh knew well to be an influential leader – steadfast, wise, and far-sighted – they feared this could put them at risk of war with the Yathribites, or the blockade of their trade routes to the Levant (which had to go through Yathrib), or a boycott upon them as they had earlier done to the Muslims, when they placed them under siege in Abu Talib's Pass for three years.

The Quraysh Plotting

The Quraysh realized that something expedient needed to be done to ward off this growing danger and what they perceived to be an impending threat not only to their sovereignty, but to their very existence. A danger that had only one principle source, Messenger Muhammad (PBBUH) – the banner-bearer of Islam.

An emergency meeting was called in *Dar Al-Nadwah* (Assembly House). It was attended by all prominent chiefs of the Qurayshi clans, in addition to an uninvited guest: an elderly stranger to Makkah, dressed in a thick garment. When they asked him who he was, he replied, “An old man from Najd who has heard what you have arranged and has come to be with you to hear what you shall say. Perhaps you will benefit from his opinion and advice.”

They agreed and welcomed him in. The question is: who was this old Najdi man? What he was up to? He was Satan disguised in the form of a venerable old man. He came himself to attend this demonic meeting. Indeed, there would be no bigger loser than him if this message succeeded to spread and flourish, and if this Prophet (PBBUH) was to continue guiding people to the straight path.

The meeting commenced and three main suggestions were put forward:

1. The first suggestion was to bound the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) in fetters and lock him up behind a fastened door and wait for him to die the same kind of death that poets before him had gone through, such as Zuhayr, Al-Nabighah [names of two pre-Islamic poets], and the like.

The old man from Najd (Satan) objected, saying, “No, by Allah, this is not a sound option. If you were to imprison him as you say, the news of it would leak out to his Companions from behind the door which you had closed upon him. In no time, they would attack you and liberate him from your hands. Their numbers would increase more through him until they would overthrow your

authority. This is not a sound option. You must think of something else.”

2. The second suggestion was to expel the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) from Makkah and banish him to a distant land. Once he was gone, they would not care where he went or what happened to him. Then the Quraysh would be able put their affairs back in order and restore their social harmony to what it had been previously.

The old man from Najd objected to this proposal as well. He said, “Have you not noticed his fine speech, beautiful words, and his way of winning over the hearts of people? By Allah, if you do that, you will never be safe. He might go and settle with some Arab tribe and win them over as his followers. Then he would come with them and attack you in your land. He would seize power from your hands and do with you what he wished.”

3. The third suggestion was to kill the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH), the root cause of this threat. Here the old man from Najd (Satan) warned them against this, reminding that the Prophet’s (PBBUH) clansmen, Banu Hashim and Banu `Abdul-Muttalib, would seek revenge on his behalf (regardless of their religion or beliefs), and a civil war might arise from this situation. This option was also put aside.

Finally a truly diabolical suggestion was put forward by Abu Jahl, who said, “I suggest that we take a strong, well-born youth from every clan and give each of them a sharp sword. Then they should go to Muhammad and all stab him together with their swords as one man and kill him. This way, we will get rid of him, and the responsibility for shedding his blood will lie equally upon all the clans. Banu `Abd Manaf will not be able to wage war against the whole of their people (tribe) and will have to accept the blood money which we shall pay to them.”

An expression of ecstasy came over the face of the Najdi elder (Satan), and he said, “The correct option is that expressed by this man. I hold no other than it.” Having reached this decision, the chiefs of the Qurayshi left the meeting

determined to execute it immediately, without delay.

They Plot and Plan and Almighty Allah Also Plans

The plan was thus devised, and the decision of assassination was unanimously adopted. But Allah's Providential Intervention was at work in response. Angel Jibril (PBUH) came down by Allah's Command and disclosed the Quraysh's plot to the Prophet (PBBUH). Angel Jibril then gave him Allah's Permission to emigrate and commanded him not to sleep in his bed that night.

Qur'anic verses exposing the evil conspiracy of the Quraysh were revealed, after the Prophet's (PBBUH) Hijrah: "And (remember, O Muhammad) when the disbelievers plotted against you to imprison you, or to kill you, or to expel you (from Makkah). They planned and Allah (also) planned, and Allah is the Best of planners." (Al-Anfal 8:30)

The Prophet's (PBBUH) Emigration Arrangements

The serious situations that came up throughout the course of the emigration journey clearly demonstrate the Prophet's (PBBUH) wisdom and steadfast ability to manage crises efficiently. Some may wonder why Allah (Exalted be He) did not just transport the Prophet (PBBUH) to Yathrib (Madinah) as He had done in the *Isra'* journey – when He (Glorified be He) took him miraculously on a night journey from the Sacred Mosque to Al-Aqsa Mosque. Indeed, Almighty Allah is All Capable to do as He pleases. But it was part of Allah's Wisdom that His Beloved Chosen Prophet, Muhammad (PBBUH), set an example for humanity to follow, and be inspired, educated, and motivated by his life and actions that continue to yield benefits to us in this life and the next.

To Abu Bakr's House

The day the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) was granted his Lord's Permission to emigrate and leave Makkah, he (PBBUH) went to Abu Bakr's house at noon.

This was a time at which he (PBBUH) did not usually pay visits, and during which people would customarily take a nap.

When Abu Bakr saw him, he said, “May my mother and father be sacrificed for him! By Allah, the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) would not come at this hour unless something important had happened.”

As he came in, the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) said to Abu Bakr, “**Ask whoever is with you to leave,**” as an extra measure to ensure utmost privacy.

Abu Bakr replied, “O Messenger of Allah, there is no one (here) except my two daughters (meaning `Aishah and Asma’).”

The Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) said, “**Allah has given me permission to emigrate.**”

Abu Bakr said, “Companionship, O Messenger of Allah!”

Confirming Abu Bakr’s hopes, the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) replied, “**Companionship.**”

After arranging the emigration plan and details, the Prophet (PBBUH) returned to his home and waited for night to fall. In the meantime, he (PBBUH) went on with his normal daily activities to avoid anyone suspecting that he was preparing to leave Makkah.

`Ali Sleeps on the Prophet’s (PBBUH) Bed Instead of Him

The Prophet (PBBUH) confided in `Ali (RA) what had happened and his planned departure that same night. He (PBBUH) said to `Ali, “**Sleep on my bed and wrap yourself in my green Hadhrami¹ cloak. Nothing you dislike will befall you from them.**” He (PBBUH) further asked `Ali to remain in Makkah until he had handed back to their owners on his behalf all the valuables that had been deposited with him.

¹ From Hadhramaut in Yemen.

This was one contradiction of the disbelievers of the Quraysh. Although they did not believe in Prophet Muhammad's prophethood, they trusted him alone for the safekeeping of their precious belongings and items.

The Assassins Surround the Prophet's (PBBUH) House

The Prophet (PBBUH) used to go to sleep at the beginning of the night after offering the '*Isha*' (Night) Prayer, then he (PBBUH) would wake up at midnight and go out to offer supererogatory prayer by the Ka`bah. The Quraysh knew his pattern well.

So, when the darkness and silence of night fell, the youths from the Quraysh assigned to commit the planned murder gathered at the door of the Prophet's (PBBUH) house in anticipation of him coming out to pray, so that they could attack him and execute their evil plan. They were on the alert and kept watch all night for some sign of movement.

The Prophet (PBBUH) Leaves His House

At midnight, the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) stepped out of his house. Taking a handful of dust, he passed through the assassins gathered outside and sprinkled it over their heads. As he (PBBUH) sprinkled the dust, he recited the Qur'anic verses: "Ya-Sin. By the wise Qur'an, you (O Muhammad) are indeed one of the Messengers, on a Straight Path..." to the words: "... and We (Allah) have put a barrier before them, and a barrier behind them, and We have covered them up, so that they cannot see." (Ya-Sin 36:1-9)

That 'barrier' was what really occurred. Allah (Glorified be He) took away their ability to see Prophet Muhammad (PBBUH). By the time the Prophet (PBBUH) had finished reciting these Qur'anic verses, not one of them was without dust on his head. The Prophet (PBBUH) then headed to Abu Bakr's house.

The assassins outside continued to besiege the Prophet's (PBBUH) house, thinking he was still inside, waiting for him to come out. Every now and then,

they peeped through a gap in his door to make sure that he was still sleeping, but little did they guess that the person lying on the bed was `Ali, not Muhammad (PBBUH).

Dawn was creeping in when a passer-by, who saw them standing at the Prophet's door, approached them and asked, "What are you waiting for?" They replied, "Muhammad."

He said, "You have failed and lost, for by Allah, he has passed by you and put dust on your heads."

The group of assassins said, "We swear by Allah we have not seen him." They rose, shook the dust from their heads, and began to investigate the matter.

They looked through the crack in the door and, seeing `Ali lying on the bed, they exclaimed, "By Allah, this is Muhammad sleeping, covered by his cloak," and continued watching and waiting there.

It was not until morning, when `Ali got up from the bed, that they realized that the man had told them the truth. They interrogated `Ali about the Prophet's (PBBUH) whereabouts, but he informed them that he had no idea.

The Emigrant to Allah Starts His Journey

The Prophet (PBBUH) reached Abu Bakr's house and, wary of the Quraysh's watchful eyes that could be monitoring his house, they departed through a rear gate.

With their exit began the emigrant's journey to Allah, the Most Exalted.

The Prophet (PBBUH) knew that the Quraysh would go after him tenaciously and search every nook to find him. So instead of taking the main road to Yathrib in the north of Makkah, as the Quraysh would expect, he (PBBUH) took a seldom-traveled road in the opposite direction, located south of Makkah and leading to Yemen.

The Prophet (PBBUH) followed this route until he got to Thawr Mountain. It was a high mountain, at the end of which was a cave that could only be reached by a rough and rocky ascent.

The Two Companions climbed this difficult ascent until they reached Thawr Cave at its summit.

Entering the Cave

On reaching the cave, Abu Bakr said, “By Allah, you will not enter until I have entered first; so if there is something harmful inside (such as a scorpion or a serpent), it will harm me instead of you.”

Abu Bakr went inside the cave and swept it clean. On noticing a hole in one of its walls, potentially allowing venomous insects or reptiles to enter, he tore a piece of his waist garment and filled the hole with it before the Prophet (PBBUH) entered.

The Quraysh Disappointed and More Frustrated than Ever

The Quraysh were very enraged and disappointed at discovering that the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) had escaped on the night of their plot against his life, and took out their fury on `Ali ibn Abu Talib (RA).

They beat `Ali, dragged him to the Ka`bah, and kept him prisoner in order to extract information from him about the Prophet’s (PBBUH) whereabouts. `Ali divulged nothing.

They then headed towards Abu Bakr’s house and knocked at his door. His daughter, Asma’ bint Abu Bakr, came out. “Where is your father?” they demanded. When she told them she did not know, Abu Jahl angrily slapped her face so strongly that her earring fell off.

The Quraysh escalated their search for the Prophet (PBBUH) and his Companion Abu Bakr. They combed all routes leading out of Makkah and

offered a reward of one hundred camels for anyone giving information leading to their death or capture.

Young men from every clan of the Quraysh rushed off in pursuit of the Two Companions, searching in every direction, until a group of men were able to track them all the way up to the Cave of Thawr.

“Do Not Grieve... Indeed, Allah Is with Us”

The pursuers approached and stood at the mouth of the cave, coming so close to their hiding place that Abu Bakr was filled with fear for the Prophet’s (PBBUH) safety. He said, “O Messenger of Allah, if any of them looks down at his feet, he will see us!” The Prophet (PBBUH) replied, with staunch trust in Allah’s Support, **“What do you think, O Abu Bakr, of two whose Third is Allah? Do not grieve. Allah is with us!”**

Regarding this incident, Allah (the Most Exalted) revealed His Saying: *“If you do not help him, (it makes no difference to the Prophet, because) Allah has already helped him when the disbelievers expelled him (from Makkah), and he was one of two, when they were in the cave and he said to his companion, ‘Do not grieve. Allah is surely with us.’ So, Allah sent down His tranquility upon him and supported him with forces (angels) that you did not see, and made the word of the disbelievers the lowest, while the Word of Allah is the highest. And Allah is Almighty, All-Wise.”* (Al-Tawbah 9:40)

The Miracle of the Cave

Full and unwavering trust in Allah’s Help brought a miracle: a spider spun a cobweb right across the entrance to the cave and a pair of wild pigeons made a nest and laid their eggs there. And so Allah willed to protect His Messenger (PBBUH) with the flimsiest of all His created things – a spider’s web.

When the Qurayshi men arrived at the mouth of the cave and saw a cobweb across its entrance, someone among them said, “There is a cobweb here that must have been spun before Muhammad was born.” According to another narration,

when one of them approached and saw two nesting pigeons, he returned without looking inside the cave. The other men with him asked, “Why did you not look inside?” He replied, “I saw two wild pigeons on the mouth of the cave, and so I learned that no one can be inside.” And so they left.

Three Days in the Cave

The Prophet (PBBUH) stayed in the cave for three consecutive days and nights. Abu Bakr’s son, `Abdullah, used to spend his day among the Quraysh, listening to what they were plotting and what they were saying regarding the Prophet (PBBUH) and his father. In the evening, he would come to them and apprise them of the latest situation in Makkah.

Abu Bakr’s daughter, Asma’, brought them food, and Abu Bakr’s freed slave, `Amir ibn Fuhairah, who grazed his sheep during the day, would bring the herd close to the cave every night to supply the Two Companions with fresh milk. On his way back to Makkah, `Amir would follow the footprints of `Abdullah and Asma’ and erase their tracks by having the sheep trot over them. This continued for the three nights they stayed in the cave.

Enduring a Sting Rather Than Awakening the Prophet (PBUH)

Upon entering the cave, the Prophet (PBBUH) rested his head in Abu Bakr’s lap and fell asleep. Suddenly, Abu Bakr noticed a hole in the cave wall and plugged it with his toes, but something stung his foot. He experienced severe pain but kept motionless so as not to awaken the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH). Finally, overcome with pain, his tears fell onto the Prophet’s (PBBUH) face and woke him up.

The Prophet (PBBUH) asked, “**What is wrong, O Abu Bakr?**”

Abu Bakr replied, “I have been bitten. Let my mother and father be sacrificed for you, O Messenger of Allah.” The Prophet (PBBUH) put his saliva on the spot where he had been bitten and Abu Bakr’s pain was instantly healed. The Prophet (PBBUH) then supplicated Allah for him.

Out of Makkah and the Cave

When the third day arrived, the intensity of the search began to slacken. Three days of relentless searching with no success caused the Quraysh's rage to abate. The Prophet (PBBUH) and his Companion had already started preparing to leave the cave and proceed to their destination – Yathrib.

The Prophet (PBBUH) had hired a non-Muslim man named `Abdullah ibn Urayqit, who was an expert route finder, to act as their guide. Although he was a polytheist, they had trusted him with their mounts. They took his promise to bring their two she-camels to the cave of Thawr at an appointed date and time. This implies that, if trust was high, the Prophet (PBBUH) would utilize the skill set of the most qualified in a specific field, regardless of personal creed or opinion.

At the appointed date and time, `Abdullah ibn Urayqit showed up with their two she-camels. Asma, Abu Bakr's daughter, brought them their travelling provisions. When she could not find anything with which to tie their food and water supply to the camels, she divided her belt in two and used one part as a strap to secure their provisions and wrapped the other round her waist. For this reason, she was called *Dhatul-Nitaqayn* (She with the Two Waistbands).

The Prophet (PBBUH) and Abu Bakr finally set off. With them were `Amir ibn Fuhairah, Abu Bakr's shepherd, and their trusted expert guide, `Abdullah ibn Urayqit.

Abu Bakr took with him all his wealth, as much as five thousand dirhams. As they went up the mountain and the Makkan houses began to disappear from view, the Prophet (PBBUH) had a final look back at Makkah, and said, **“By Allah, you are the best of Allah's lands and the dearest of Allah's lands to me. Had I not been driven out of you, I would not have left you.”** And he (PBBUH) wept.

On the Road to Yathrib

`Abdullah ibn Urayqit followed an unconventional route to Yathrib. Instead of taking them north, he headed southward through the lower side of Makkah, in the direction of the mountain range of Tihamah and close to the coast of the Red Sea.

On getting near the Red Sea, `Abdullah ibn Urayqit led the group northward, taking a path uncommonly taken by the people; parallel to the shore, but far removed from it. Throughout the journey, he navigated them expertly, choosing the least trodden routes, and the Two Companions with their guide continued on their journey to Yathrib.

However, the road was not free from hurdles and wonders. Below are some of the incidents that took place on the way:

1. "The Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) Drank Until My Thirst Was Quenched"

The Two Companions, along with their guide, travelled the whole night and next morning until noon, when nobody could be seen on the way (because of the severe heat). Then there appeared before them a long rock providing shade, which the sunshine had not yet reached. They dismounted there. Abu Bakr smoothed out for the Prophet (PBBUH) a space on which he could sleep, saying, "Sleep, O Messenger of Allah. I will keep guard around you."

While Abu Bakr was guarding the Prophet (PBBUH) as he slept, he saw a shepherd with his sheep coming near the rock, seeking some shade as well. Abu Bakr asked him, "Do your sheep have milk?" The shepherd said, "Yes." Abu Bakr said, "Would you milk (some) for us?" He said, "Yes," and he milked a little milk into a small container.

Abu Bakr placed the milk in a leather bag he carried with him (for the Prophet PBBUH to drink and perform ablution from) and took it to the Prophet (PBBUH). Not wanting to awaken him, Abu Bakr waited until the Prophet

(PBBUH) woke up. He then said, “Drink, O Messenger of Allah.” Abu Bakr went on to narrate, “And the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) drank until my thirst was quenched.” Such was the love of the Companions for the Prophet (PBBUH). It surmounted their own selves.

2. “A Man Showing Me the Way”

A man whom Abu Bakr knew spotted him on the way to Yathrib and asked him who was the man accompanying him. This question must have been difficult to answer unexpectedly; Abu Bakr replied very simply, “He is a man who shows me the way.”

Hearing this, the questioner would think that Abu Bakr meant he was guiding him through the roads and pathways of the desert, while in fact, Abu Bakr was referring to Allah’s Path.

3. Abu Bakr Constantly Guarding the Prophet (PBBUH)

Along the way, Abu Bakr alternated his position from sometimes walking on the right side of the Prophet (PBBUH) to sometimes walking on his left, and from walking in front of him to walking behind him. The Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) asked him the reason for doing so, and Abu Bakr replied, “O Messenger of Allah, when I remember the enemy’s observation, I walk ahead of you. And when I remember the enemy’s pursuit, I walk behind you. And once on your right and once on your left side, for I cannot feel secure for you (against ambushes).”

4. Suraqah ibn Malik

As mentioned before, the Quraysh had announced a reward of one hundred camels to whoever would lead them to Muhammed (PBBUH) and his Companion Abu Bakr (RA), dead or alive. This fueled the people’s eagerness to capture them. One of the men who went after the reward was Suraqah ibn Malik ibn Ju`shum. While sitting in the company of his clansmen, Banu Mudlij, he was approached by a man from his clan who said to him, “O Suraqah, I have seen

three black figures near the coast. I believe them to be Muhammad and his Companions.”

Suraqah realized that it was indeed them, but to discourage the man from further pursuing his search, he said, “No, it is not them. You must have seen so-and-so and so-and-so.”

Suraqah wanted to mislead the man to get the one-hundred-camel reward for himself. So he stayed in the gathering for a while and then got up and rode his horse at a gallop until he almost drew close to them (the Prophet PBBUH and Abu Bakr). Then, his horse stumbled, and he fell from it.

Suraqah remounted his horse and spurred it again, but suddenly the forelegs of his horse sank knee-deep into the ground and he violently tumbled down from it. He managed with great difficulty to pull the horse’s legs out of the sand. When it stood up straight, its forelegs raised dust in the sky like smoke.

Suraqah knew that all his attempts would be futile, and terror came upon him. He felt that he might be exposing himself to grave danger should he spur his horse on for a fourth time. He stopped and called out to them, “I am Suraqah ibn Ju`shum. Wait that I may speak to you. By Allah, you do not need to be suspicious of me, and nothing hateful shall befall you from me.”

They stopped, and Suraqah rode his horse to them. He reflected how he had been hampered from reaching them, and a certainty came to him that the cause of the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) would become victorious someday. He said to the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH), “Your people have assigned a reward equal to that of blood-money for your capture,” and he told them all the plans of the Makkans regarding them.

Suraqah offered them journey provisions and equipment, but they accepted nothing from him, nor did they ask him for anything. The Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) just said to him, “**Keep our matter a secret.**”

Suraqah then requested from him a written statement of (future) security

and peace. The Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) ordered `Amir ibn Fuhairah to write it down for him on a parchment, along with an amazing promise from the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) that he one day be given the two bracelets of Kisra (Khosrow or Chosroes, King of Persia).

The Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) proceeded on his journey, and Suraqah returned to Makkah. As he went on his way, he met some other men who were searching for the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) and his Companions. He sent them back from the right direction, saying that he had already looked and found no one there.

5. Near the Tent of Umm Ma`bad Al-Khuza`iyah

About one hundred and thirty kilometers from Makkah, the Prophet and his Companions passed by the tent of a woman named `Atikah bint Khalid Al-Khuza`iyah, better known as Umm Ma`bad. She was a strong woman who used to sit in the courtyard of her tent and offer food and drink to any passers-by. They asked her if she had anything they could buy, and she replied, “By Allah, if we had anything, I would not be lacking in extending hospitality to you.” Because it was a drought year, they had been left in a straitened condition.

The Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) then looked at a ewe in the corner of the tent and asked her, “What is this ewe, O Umm Ma`bad?” She replied, “This is a ewe that is too weak to join the herd.” He (PBBUH) asked her, “**Does it have any milk?**” She replied, “It is too weak to have any.” He (PBBUH) asked her, “**Would you allow me to milk it?**” She replied, “Yes, (I swear) by my father and mother, if you think there is milk in it (in its udder), you may milk it.”

The Prophet (PBBUH) passed his hand over its udder and invoked Allah’s Name and Blessing, after which milk began to flow abundantly. The Prophet (PBBUH) asked for a vessel big enough to suffice for a group and milked into it in a stream until it was covered with froth. He first offered the milk to Umm Ma`bad and she drank her fill. He then offered the milk to his Companions and they drank their fill. Finally, he (PBBUH) himself drank. He (PBBUH) milked the

ewe a second time until he filled up the entire vessel. He left it with Umm Ma`bad and departed with his Companions.

Shortly afterwards, Abu Ma`bad, her husband, arrived. When he saw the milk, he was astonished and asked her, "From where did you get this, O Umm Ma`bad, when the ewes are pasturing far away and there is no other animal giving milk in the tent?" She said, "No, by Allah (you are right). But a blessed man passed by us." And she gave her husband a full account of what had happened

Her husband said, "By Allah, he seems to be the man the Quraysh are after. Describe him for me, O Umm Ma`bad." She gave him an accurate and eloquent description of the Prophet (PBBUH) – which is the resource that most biographical historians draw upon in their description of the Prophet (PBBUH). After her husband heard it, he remarked, "I am sure this is the Qurayshi man they are talking about. I have resolved to become a companion of his. I will indeed, if I find a way to do so."

6. The Prophet (PBBUH) Presents Islam to Tribes along the Way

The Prophet (PBBUH) met up with several tribe members on his way to Yathrib, including Buraidah ibn Al-Husaib of Aslam tribe (from Banu Sahm), accompanied by about eighty of his tribesmen, and they all embraced Islam. He also met Abu Tamim Aws ibn Hajr, who provided them with a camel and sent along his servant to escort them to their destination. On reaching Rim Valley, the Prophet (PBBUH) met Al-Zubair ibn Al-`Awwam in a caravan of Muslim merchants heading back from Syria. Al-Zubair presented the Prophet (PBBUH) and Abu Bakr with a gift of white garments.

7. Arriving at Quba'

The Great Emigrant (PBBUH) spent two weeks travelling. He left Makkah on Monday, spent three days in the cave, and then twelve days crossing rugged roads, valleys, mountains, and deserts. Monday was the day of his arrival in Quba'. Their guide, `Abdullah ibn Urayqit, followed indirect and uncommon routes

along the entire journey. When they got closer to Yathrib, he took them by the familiar route that passed through Dhul-Hulaifah to Yathrib, until they arrived at Quba’.

Quba’ was a city two leagues, or about six miles, away from Yathrib. In Quba’, the Prophet (PBBUH) was accommodated in the house of a revered elderly man, named Kulthum ibn Al-Hidm, from the tribe of Banu `Amr ibn Awf.

The Prophet (PBBUH) stayed in Quba’ for four days, from Monday to Thursday. During those four days, he (PBBUH) built the very first mosque since the start of his prophetic mission, erected and sustained on a foundation of piety to Allah (Exalted be He), and he (PBBUH) led prayers inside it.

Three days after they arrived in Quba’, `Ali ibn Abu Talib caught up with the Prophet (PBBUH), after having returned the entrusted belongings to their respective owners on behalf of the Prophet (PBBUH).

`Ali travelled to Yathrib on foot, journeying at night and resting during the day, persevering and bearing formidable effort to be reunited with the Prophet (PBBUH) and his Companions.

Departing from Quba’

The Prophet (PBBUH) sent word to his maternal uncles from Banu Al-Najjar, and they came armed with their swords to accompany him into Yathrib.

On Friday, the Prophet (PBBUH) set off from Quba’, and as they were passing by the neighborhood of Banu Salim ibn `Uwf, the time for Friday Prayer became due. The Prophet (PBBUH) halted there and led the people in Friday Prayer in a valley called Ranuna’. That was the first Friday Prayer which the Prophet (PBBUH) held in Madinah, with a congregation of around one hundred of his Companions, and he (PBBUH) delivered a sermon to them.

On that site, the Muslims built a mosque that was called *Al-Jumu`ah* (Friday) or *Al-Wadi* (Valley) Mosque.

Entering Yathrib – The Enlightened or Radiant City of the Prophet (PBBUH)

The Muslims in Yathrib were eagerly anticipating the Prophet's (PBBUH) arrival from the moment they heard about his departure from Makkah. They started going out every morning to Al-Harrah (a lava field) on the outskirts of Yathrib to wait for him until they were forced to return by the unbearable midday sun beating down on them.

One day the Muslims of Yathrib returned, having waited all morning for the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH), and just as they entered their houses, a Jew man, who had ascended to the top of one of their forts looking for something, saw the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) and his Companions clad in white, coming from afar. The Jew could not restrain himself from calling out in his loudest voice, "O Arabs, here is your great man whom you have been waiting for!" Upon hearing his words, the Muslims rushed out full of joy and excitement to meet the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH).

Despite many of them not having seen or met the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) before, their hearts overflowed with belief and love for him and his message.

The Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) appeared and entered Yathrib from the direction of *Thaniyat Al-Wada`* (Pass of Al-Wada`) and was surrounded by its welcoming inhabitants: men, women, and children, all repeatedly chanting:

The full moon (Muhammad) has risen over us

From the Pass of Al-Wada`

And all thanks (to Allah) is incumbent upon us

So long as a caller calls to Allah

O you who were sent among us

You have come with a heeded command

You have brought honor to this city

Welcome, O best of callers

It was a gracious reception, warm with hospitality and radiating with love. This was how Yathrib received the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH), the light that would guide its people and all humankind on the road to Allah (Exalted be He).

Since that day, Yathrib has been called Madinah (*Al-Madinah Al-Munawwarah*) or the Radiant City of the Prophet (PBBUH). It was, and still is, indeed radiant.

The Prophet (PBBUH) in Madinah

The Prophet (PBBUH) entered Madinah, bringing light into it. The sight of him gave the people of the city a new sense of happiness. Many of them had never seen him, and some of them thought Abu Bakr (RA) to be him, until the shade withdrew from the Prophet (PBBUH) and Abu Bakr stood to shade him with his own garment. It was at this moment that the people recognized their Prophet (PBBUH).

Surrounded by his maternal uncles, the Prophet (PBBUH) rode through the heart of Madinah. As he (PBBUH) rode through the city's streets, every house of Al-Ansar (the Supporters, the title given to the people of Madinah) he passed by tried to grab hold of his camel's reins and steer it towards their dwelling place, with fervent requests for him to stay with them. The Prophet (PBBUH) kindly replied to them, **“Let go of it, for it is divinely commanded.”**

The camel continued on until it reached a yard for drying dates that belonged to two orphan boys from Banu `Adi ibn Al-Najjar, and there it knelt. The Prophet (PBBUH) did not descend from it until it had risen, moved forward a little, turned and gone back to its original spot, and knelt again. Then he (PBBUH) dismounted.

The place where the camel knelt was on a land belonging to his maternal uncles from Banu Al-Najjar. This coincidence was a gift from Allah (the Clement). It was consistent with the Prophet's (PBBUH) wish to settle with his kindred.

The Prophet (PBBUH) said, **“This place, Allah willing, will be our abiding place.”** He (PBBUH) then called over the orphan boys, Suhail and Sahl, and asked to buy the land from them. They replied, “No, rather, we will give it to you as a gift, O Messenger of Allah.” He (PBBUH) refused to accept it for free and insisted upon buying it from them. It is the site where the Prophet's Mosque (*Al-Masjid Al-Nabawi*) now stands.

This yard of Banu Al-Najjar was right in front of Abu Ayyub's house (Khalid ibn Zaid). When the people began asking the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) to stay with them, Abu Ayyub Al-Ansari hurriedly stepped forward and took the Prophet's (PBBUH) saddlebag into his house. So the Prophet (PBBUH) entered Abu Ayyub's house and excused himself from the other people who were inviting him by (humorously) saying, **"A man must go with his saddlebag."**

Inside Abu Ayyub's House

The Prophet (PBBUH) chose to stay on the lower floor of Abu Ayyub's two-storey house. Abu Ayyub could not accept this and said, "May my father and mother be sacrificed for you. I hate to be above you, and you below me." The Prophet (PBBUH) replied, **"O Abu Ayyub, it is indeed easier for us, and for those who visit us, to stay in the lower portion of the house."** Then, during one of the nights, a water pitcher got broken. Abu Ayyub and his wife hurried to dry the floor with their velvet quilt, the only covering they had, fearing that the water might drip on the Prophet (PBBUH) and disturb him. After this incident, Abu Ayyub kept asking the Prophet (PBBUH) to move to the top floor, until he (PBBUH) agreed.

Abu Ayyub used to prepare supper and bring it to the Prophet (PBBUH). He (PBBUH) ate first and then Abu Ayyub and his wife ate. One night, they prepared a meal for him that contained some onions or garlic, but the Prophet (PBBUH) sent it back without eating any of it. Abu Ayyub was dismayed and went up and asked him, "O Messenger of Allah, let my father and mother be sacrificed for you! You have returned your supper, and I saw no trace of your hand; whereas before, whenever you returned it, Umm Ayyub and I looked for the trace of your hand (on the food) to eat from that place, as a source of blessing."

The Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) said, **"I found in it the smell of that tree (onion or garlic), and I am a man who speaks privately** (i.e., speaks to his Lord and is visited by the angels; and these foods cause bad breath). **As for you, you may eat it."** Abu Ayyub and his wife ate the meal and never again prepared food

for the Prophet (PBBUH) that contained onions or garlic.

Every night the Prophet (PBBUH) used to receive gifts of bowls of food from the nobles of Madinah, such as Sa`d ibn `Ubadah and As`ad ibn Zurarah, among others. Not a night passed without the Prophet (PBBUH) having three or four different bowls of *Tharid* (breadcrumbs soaked in meat broth) at his door.

The Migration of the Prophet's (PBBUH) Household

After the Prophet (PBBUH) had settled in Madinah, he sent Zaid ibn Harithah and Abu Rafi` to Makkah, accompanied by the expert route guide `Abdullah ibn Uraiqit, to bring the remainder of the Prophet's (PBBUH) household to Madinah. They came back with the Prophet's (PBBUH) daughters, Fatimah and Umm Kulthum, his wife, Sawda bint Zam`ah, and his second mother, Umm Ayman, Zaid's wife, along with her son Usamah.

Zainab, the Prophet's (PBBUH) eldest daughter, was forbidden from traveling by her husband `Abul-`As ibn Al-Rabi`, who was still a disbeliever.

Ruqaiyah, his second daughter, stayed with her husband `Uthman ibn `Affan (RA) in Makkah after their return from Abyssinia and joined the Prophet (PBBUH) in Madinah a few months after his arrival.

`Abdullah ibn Abu Bakr (RA) joined the Prophet's (PBBUH) emigrating household, along with Abu Bakr's wife, Umm Ruman, and his two sisters, Asma' and `Aishah, who was not yet married to the Prophet (PBBUH).

Fever of Madinah

Since pre-Islamic times, Madinah was known to be a city constantly plagued with epidemics and diseases associated with the abundance of swamps and mosquito growth. This gave rise to what was known as the Fever of Yathrib (quartan malaria fever).

Many newcomers from among the Prophet's (PBBUH) Companions were afflicted by this fever on their arrival, including Abu Bakr, Bilal, and `Amir ibn Fuhairah. The Prophet (PBBUH) was informed of Madinah's unfavorable environment to the emigrants, and he supplicated saying, **"O Allah, make us love Madinah as much as we love Makkah or even stronger, and make it healthy, and bless its Sa` and Mudd (measures of volume) and take away its fever."**

Allah (Glorified be He) answered his Prophet's (PBBUH) supplication and removed the epidemics, and the Companions started to love Madinah. It became a desirable place that felt like Makkah and even more, after the Prophet (PBBUH) added brilliance to its light and infused it with overwhelming splendor.

The Construction of the Prophet's (PBBUH) Mosque

The first step taken by the Prophet (PBBUH) in Madinah was to build his mosque on the same spot where his camel had stopped. The Prophet (PBBUH) himself initiated the work, and the construction of the mosque began.

With his pickax, the Prophet (PBBUH) struck the first blow in digging the foundation, which consisted of stone laid to a depth of three cubits. All the Muslims eagerly participated in the construction, and the Prophet (PBBUH) carried the mud bricks and earth with them. As he (PBBUH) carried the bricks, he motivated his working Companions by saying:

O Allah! True life is the life of the Hereafter

Show mercy then to the Ansar (the Supporters, people from Madinah) and the Muhajirah (the Emigrants, people from Makkah).

The Prophet's (PBBUH) words ignited the energy of the Companions until they had completed the construction.

The Description of the Prophet's (PBBUH) Mosque

The dwellings in Madinah were well known for their castle-like structure, erected on high platforms with great walls. They were a source of pride to their owners during times of peace, and a source of security and protection during times of war. The Prophet's (PBBUH) Mosque was completely unlike this style. With the living chambers (*Hujurat*) built around it for him and his household, the entire structure was extremely simple and modest in appearance. It was reflective of the character of a true believer: unattracted by the comforts and allurements of this world. Its sole objective was attaining a high place in the Hereafter.

The Prophet's Mosque consisted of a square enclosure about one hundred

cubits in length and breadth, built with mud bricks and stones. The height of the mosque's roof was equal to that of a man, about 3.5 cubits (1.75 m). It was covered with the branches of date-palms, while the palm trunks served as columns and roof supports. Its floor was spread with pebbles and sand. In brief, it was a mosque with a small yard and low walls.

The mosque was accessed through three doors and its *Qiblah* (prayer direction) was made to face north, towards Jerusalem.¹

The people of Suffah

The construction was completed and the Prophet (PBBUH) and his household moved to their living chambers annexed to the mosque's building. Inside the mosque, the Prophet (PBBUH) created a roofed section in the back portion, in which the poor homeless emigrants could find shelter and live. It was called *Al-Suffah* (literally, the shaded place)², and the inhabitants of it became known as the People of the *Suffah*. The needy emigrants stayed there and were kindly provided for by the Muslim community.

The Prophet's Old and New Pulpits (PBBUH)

Initially, there was no pulpit in the Prophet's Mosque. The Prophet (PBBUH) used to deliver his sermons while leaning against a palm trunk near his *Musalla* (praying space). Later, a simple pulpit with three steps was built for him, which he (PBBUH) stood on and addressed the worshippers.

The first time the Prophet (PBBUH) used the new pulpit and started delivering the sermon, a sorrowful, moaning sound was heard by all present Companions, coming from the old date-palm trunk that used to be his pulpit.

The Prophet (PBBUH) stepped down when he heard the crying of the old trunk and embraced it like a child being comforted, until it became quiet. All

¹ When the *Qiblah* was changed to face the Ka'bah in Makkah, it was re-oriented to the south.

² The rest of the mosque was left open without a roof.

those present in the mosque trembled with emotion and tears because of the yearning and sadness of a piece of wood at parting with the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH).

After consoling the palm trunk, the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) said to his Companions, **“Had I not embraced it, it would have continued moaning until the Day of Resurrection,”** in grief over its separation from the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH).¹

Azan (Call to Prayer)

Prayer times were signaled by the Prophet (PBBUH) by his heading to the mosque at the due time of each prayer to lead the prayers. The people simply gathered and joined him in the congregational prayer without being summoned. But this left some Muslims, who were busy with their trade or daily professions, unaware of the exact start time of each prayer. They just used to guess the time.

Therefore, there was a need to find a way to announce to people the commencement of each prayer. The Prophet (PBBUH) consulted his Companions on the matter, and some of them suggested raising a flag high up at the time of prayer so everyone could see it. However, this suggestion was dismissed due to its ineffectiveness for the people who were asleep or not looking in the direction of the flag. Others suggested lighting a fire on a hill, but this idea was also rejected. Some others suggested using a horn like the Jews or a bell like the Christians, which the Prophet (PBBUH) did not approve of due to his dislike of imitating the Jews or the Christians.

Finally, after much debate and several rejected solutions, they agreed that the human voice was the best option, and that some men should call people to prayer when the time came.

¹ According to the narration by Jabir, the Prophet (PBUH) said, “It was crying for (missing) what it used to hear of *Dhikr* (Allah’s Remembrance) near it.”

Seeing the Call to Prayer in a Vision by `Abdullah ibn Zaid Al-Ansary

Among those men who were calling to prayer was `Abdullah ibn Zaid Al-Ansary (RA). While he was in a state between sleep and wakefulness, he experienced a vision in which he was approached by a man who said to him, “Shall I teach you some words to use when calling people for prayer?” `Abdullah said, “Yes,” and so the man said to him, “Say:

*Allahu Akbar, Allahu Akbar*¹

Allah is Greater, Allah is Greater

Allahu Akbar, Allahu Akbar

Allah is Greater, Allah is Greater

Ash-badu an la ilaha illallah,

Ash-badu an la ilaha illallah

I testify that there is no god but Allah,

I testify that there is no god but Allah

Ash-badu anna Muhammadan rasulullah,

Ash-badu anna Muhammadan rasulullah

I testify that Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah,

I testify that Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah

Haiya `alas-Salah, haiya `alas-Salah

Come to prayer, come to prayer!

Haiya `alal-falah, haiya `alal-falah

¹ *Allahu Akbar* literally means ‘Allah is Greater’; it is an unfinished phrase serving as a reminder that no matter what you can possibly think of or might be busy with, Allah is Greater and more important than that.

Come to success, come to success!

Allahu Akbar, Allahu Akbar

Allah is Greater, Allah is Greater

La ilaha illallah

None has the right to be worshipped except Allah.

When `Abdullah woke up and told the Prophet (PBBUH) about his vision, the Prophet (PBBUH) replied, **“This is a true vision (i.e., a dream sent from Allah), so teach Bilal what you have seen and let him use it to make the call to prayer, for he has a stronger voice than you.”**

Bilal Calling to Prayers

`Abdullah went with Bilal to the mosque, and he started teaching him the words of the Azan. Bilal gave the call to prayer using them.

`Umar ibn Al-Khattab was in his house when he heard the Azan being made and rushed out towards the mosque, dragging his cloak behind him. He learned that `Abdullah ibn Zaid had been taught these words in a vision he had, and he said, “By the One Who has sent you with the truth, O Messenger of Allah, I saw the same (vision) as he saw.” The Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) was pleased and said, **“All praise be to Allah.”**

The Muslims’ hearts warmed to the Azan and became elated hearing it as they congregated in the mosque for every prayer.

Near the mosque was an elevated house, owned by a woman from Banu Najjar. Bilal would climb and call the Azan from the top of the house. This was how the Azan became the call for prayer that all the people of Madinah, and everywhere else in the world, would hear before every prayer. The same call has continued until today and will continue throughout time, Allah willing.

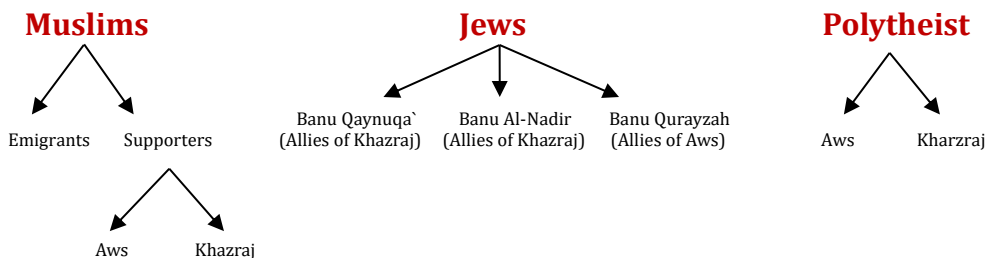
The Establishment of the Islamic State

Once the Prophet (PBBUH) and the Muslim emigrants had settled in Madinah, he (PBBUH) began to establish a Muslim state that functioned fully and solely in accordance with Allah’s Principles. Huge internal and external hurdles surrounded the realization of this Muslim state, which the Prophet (PBBUH) had to overcome.

External hurdles: These were mainly caused by the conspiracies being organized by the Quraysh and the surrounding, hostile tribes against the Prophet (PBBUH) and his followers at every possible opportunity to stop the advancement of Islam, which they saw as a direct threat to their dominance and status among Arab tribes.

Internal hurdles: These were related to building the foundations and setting the structure of the new state of Madinah. It was at the time made up of various religious and ethnic backgrounds, with three disparate categories of citizens – Muslims, Jews, and polytheists (who had still not believed in one God). Each category posed a completely different set of challenges for the Prophet (PBBUH).

The Demographic of Madinah When the Prophet (PBBUH) First Arrived



Firstly: The Muslims of Madinah

The Muslims in Madinah consisted of two groups:

1. **Al-Muhajirun (the Emigrants from Makkah):** They were the people who had left behind all their belongings and fled to Madinah with only their faith. They had no homes, or work to earn a livelihood, or wealth to provide for their needs. Their numbers were constantly increasing day by day.
2. **Al-Ansar (the Supporters of the Prophet (PBBUH) from the local inhabitants of Madinah):** Being locals to Madinah, they already had their own houses, work and established livelihoods, and were living prosperous lives. They belonged to one of the two main tribes of the city, Al-Aws or Al-Khazraj, who had a long history of discord and enmity between them.

Secondly: The Jews

The Jewish inhabitants of Madinah had migrated there after their persecution at the hands of the Assyrian people and the Romans. They settled in Yathrib and became tinged with the Arabic style in their language, attire, and culture, yet they did not assimilate with the local Arabs. They retained their ethnic identity and Jewish origin and lived in separate communities. They looked down upon the Arabs and disdained their religion of idol worship. They took pride in being People of the Scripture.

They excelled in the arts of profit-making and trade. They dominated the trade of seeds, dates, wine, and clothes. They imported clothes, seeds, and wine and exported dates. They were extremely politically savvy and took advantage of existing disagreements among the neighboring battling Arab tribes, sparing no effort to rekindle feuds among them using clandestine methods. Through this “divide and rule” policy, they protected their Jewish entity.

There were three main Jewish tribes in Madinah:

1. **Banu Qaynuqa`**: They were the allies of Al-Khazraj and their homes were located inside Madinah.
2. **Banu Al-Nadir**: They were also the allies of Al-Khazraj and resided on the outskirts of Madinah, close to the land tract of Fadak.
3. **Banu Qurayzah**: They were allies of Al-Aws and inhabited the suburbs of Madinah in Fadak.

These three were the Jewish tribes that provoked and nourished wars and conflicts between Al-Aws and Al-Khazraj for a long time. They regarded Islam with hatred and spite. Since Muhammad (PBBUH) was not one of them, and the teachings of Islam were not to their liking or interest, they harbored intense resentment against Islam and its Prophet (PBBUH). However, they hid their real feelings when the Prophet (PBBUH) first came to Madinah, and only began to openly display their attitude later.

`Abdullah ibn Salam Enters the Fold of Islam

As narrated by Imam Al-Bukhari, `Abdullah ibn Salam was one of the most knowledgeable and revered rabbis among the Jews of Madinah. He was well versed in the scriptures and able to recognize the signs of the Awaited Prophet. On hearing of the arrival of Prophet Muhammad (PBBUH) in Madinah, he came to him, wanting to know if he was truly the one prophesized in the scriptures. He asked Prophet Muhammed (PBBUH) a few questions which he knew only a prophet would be able to answer. When the Prophet (PBBUH) answered them, he instantly believed in his prophethood and embraced Islam.

`Abdullah ibn Salam said to the Prophet (PBBUH), "O Messenger of Allah, the Jews are a people given to slander. If they know of my Islam before you ask them about me, they will slander me before you."

The Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) sent for the Jewish elders to come, and upon their entry, `Abdullah went inside the house to listen. The Messenger of

Allah (PBBUH) then asked them, “What kind of man is `Abdullah ibn Salam among you?”

They replied, “He is the best of us and the son of the best of us, and the most superior among us and the son of the most superior among us.” The Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) asked, “**What would you say if `Abdullah ibn Salam became Muslim?**” They said, “May Allah protect him from that.”

`Abdullah came out to them and said, “I testify that there is no god but Allah, and that Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah.”

The Jewish elders said, “He is the wickedest of us and the son of the wickedest of us,” and they went on disparaging him.

`Abdullah said, “O Jews, fear Allah! By Allah, other than Whom there is no god, you know for certain that he (Muhammad PBBUH) is the Messenger of Allah and that he has come to you with the truth.”

They replied, “You are lying.”

Thirdly: The *Mushrikin* of Madinah

The *Mushrikin* were from the original resident Arab tribes of Madinah. They posed no threat to Islam or Muslims. Some of them often had doubts about their forefathers’ religion and contemplated leaving it. Most of them bore no hatred or malice towards Islam and Muslims. It did not take them long before they joined Islam and became sincere worshippers of Allah (Exalted be He).

This demonstrates that very often the major constraints to people joining Islam and believing in the Prophet (PBBUH) were when Islam was seen by them as a threat to their power, position, or wealth – as was the case for the Quraysh in Makkah and the Jews in Madinah.

Yet there remained a minority of Madinese Arabs who felt deep rancor and enmity towards Islam and Muslims, but they could not resist them. They had no

choice but to show insincere cordiality and artificial support. These were the hypocrites.

`Abdullah ibn Ubai ibn Salul – the Chief of the Hypocrites

The head of the hypocrites in Madinah was a man named `Abdullah ibn Ubai ibn Salul from the tribe of Al-Khazraj. He outwardly displayed belief in Islam while inwardly concealed disbelief. Just when the Madinese tribes (Al-Aws and Al-Khazraj) had agreed to appoint him as their king following the Battle of Bu`ath, the procedure was cancelled by the Prophet's (PBBUH) arrival. People left him and instead gathered around the Prophet (PBBUH), which Salul saw as the Prophet (PBBUH) taking the kingdom away from him.

This created bitter animosity within him towards the Prophet (PBBUH), but he felt that the conditions were not in his favor. He thought it wiser to outwardly join Islam than to stand out against it and lose all future glory and prestige. He put on an outward show of faith in Islam after the Battle of Badr, while remaining a strong disbeliever. Thus, he very well deserved the title of 'the chief of the hypocrites.'

The above summarizes the political landscape that the Prophet (PBBUH) was faced with on entry into Madinah.

The Prophet's (PBBUH) Method of Dealing with Political Challenges

We now move into a new chapter in the Prophet's (PBBUH) life and how, with Allah's Help, he (PBBUH) started addressing the various issues, difficulties, and the parties involved.

The Prophet (PBBUH) treated each individual case and person differently, in the way they required and deserved, using soul purification and refinement, and inculcating the values of the Qur'an and wisdom (Sunnah; prophetic teachings). That was what Allah (Exalted be He) wanted His Prophet (PBBUH) to be: the exemplary politician, the striver, and the community builder. Each of these roles entrusted upon him should be done entirely for Allah's Sake and for truth's sake, which the Prophet (PBBUH) came to establish.

The Prophet (PBBUH) performed all his roles with mastery, providing humanity with an unparalleled example of human perfection. This is in contrast with most kings and rulers of the earth, whose actions are driven by worldly purposes and gains, without consideration for the Hereafter. Many of them would justify and compromise almost anything to keep their throne.

The method adopted by the Prophet (PBBUH) for the spiritual and human development of the people of Madinah was based on the three following pillars:

1. Purifying, elevating, and uniting the souls of Al-Ansar, who were his Muslim supporters from the natives of Madinah.
2. Establishing a bond of brotherhood between the Muslims of Madinah (Al-Ansar) and the Muslims of Makkah (Al-Muhajirun).
3. Establishing a general constitution for regulating the relationships among all the citizens of the Madinah community, Muslims and non-Muslims.

Firstly: Uniting Al-Ansar

The Prophet (PBBUH) was aware of the old rivalries that existed between the two tribes of Madinah (Al-Aws and Al-Khazraj). To prevent them surfacing again, the Prophet (PBBUH) worked to uplift their spirits above past grudges and ill feelings towards one another through soul purification and enlightenment and planting good morals and values.

For this reason, the Prophet's (PBBUH) first utterances upon his arrival in Madinah encouraged fraternity and friendly coexistence. Among his sayings were:

- **“O people, spread peace, feed people, maintain ties with your family, pray at night when people are asleep, and you shall enter Paradise in peace.”**
- **“They will not enter Paradise whose neighbor is not secure from their evil (or trouble).”**
- **“A Muslim is the one from whose tongue and hands the Muslims are safe.”**
- **“None of you (truly) believes until they love for their brother what they love for themselves.”**
- **“A believer to another believer is like a building whose different parts enforce each other.”**

His prophetic method slowly conciliated the affections of the two tribes and had a strong and permanent influence on uniting the two into one harmonious whole.

Secondly: Establishing Brotherhood between the Emigrants and the Supporters

Outside the realm of natural blood and kinship ties, there were two known types of relationships that existed between Arabs, namely adoption and *Muwalah* (patronage).

1. Adoption: Adoption gave the right to the adopted person to inherit from the one who adopted them and entitled them to all the rights of a blood child. Such was the case for Zaid ibn Harithah (RA), whom the Prophet (PBBUH) had adopted and was called Zaid ibn Muhammed. This custom continued until Islam came and abolished adoption, and Zaid reverted to his original name.

2. *Muwalah* (patronage): This was a form of allegiance among individual persons or tribes. According to it, a person would say to another, “My blood is your blood. My destruction is your destruction. My revenge is your revenge. My war is your war. My peace is your peace. You shall inherit from me, and I shall inherit from you. You shall be held responsible on my behalf, and I shall be held responsible on your behalf. You shall pay blood money on my behalf, and I shall pay blood money on your behalf.” This formula created a protective bond similar to that of kinship among people who had no blood relatives.

3. Brotherhood: Brotherhood through faith in Allah (Exalted be He) was something new introduced by Prophet Muhammad (PBBUH). It was not known among the Arabs before that time.

With his insightful wisdom, the Prophet (PBBUH) did not wish for the Muslims in Madinah to be split into a party of Al-Muhajirun and a party of Al-Ansar; rather, he (PBBUH) wanted to merge them into one group. So, he (PBBUH) established a firm bond of brotherhood between them. He (PBBUH) said, “**Become brothers in Allah. Every two become brothers.**”

Thus a new brotherhood was formed between the Muslims on the basis of solidarity and equality of rights and responsibilities between them, and by which

the right of inheritance was passed on to the deceased's brother-in-faith instead of next-of-kin relatives.

This practice continued till the following Qur'anic verse was revealed: "...and those related by blood are more entitled (to inheritance) in Allah's Decree than the (other) believers and the emigrants..." (Al-Ahzab 33:6) After this law, the regular rule of inheritance to close family members took its usual course. However, the bond of brotherhood-in-faith continued, and the closeness of the ties built through it between people was maintained.

While forging the bonds of brotherhood, the Prophet (PBBUH) avoided choosing a brother from Al-Ansar for himself, as that could have stirred up sensitivities among the clans due to the pride and status that would have been gained from becoming the Prophet's (PBBUH) brother. Careful to address this issue wisely, the Prophet (PBBUH) lifted `Ali's hand and announced that he would be his brother.

And so pairs of brothers from Al-Muhajirun and Al-Ansar, bonded by faith, were formed by the Prophet (PBBUH). He (PBBUH) made his uncle Hamzah the brother of Zaid bin Harithah, and Abu Bakr (RA) the brother of Kharijah ibn Zaid Al-Khazraji, and `Umar ibn Al-Khattab (RA) the brother of `Utban ibn Malik Al-Khazraji, and `Abdul-Rahman ibn `Awf the brother of Sa`d ibn Al-Rabi`, and so on.

With this new brotherhood pledge, the Prophet (PBBUH) cemented the unity of the Muslims with such skill and cleverness that we find ourselves bowing our heads in reverence and awe.

Singular Instances of Altruism and Consolation Among the Companions

The brotherhood pact brought out the best in people. They acted towards one another with sublime compassion and benevolence. Below are but a few outstanding examples:

Among Traders

After the Prophet (PBBUH) made `Abdul-Rahman ibn `Awf the brother of Sa`d ibn Al-Rabi`, Sa`d said to him, "I am the richest of Al-Ansar, and I shall share my wealth with you. I also have two wives; see which one you prefer, name her to me, and I shall divorce her. When the *`Iddah* (woman's prescribed waiting period after divorce) is over, you may marry her." `Abdul-Rahman ibn `Awf replied, "May Allah (the Most Exalted) bless you in your wealth and family. Kindly guide me to the marketplace."

Sa`d directed him to the marketplace of Banu Qaynuqa`, and `Abdul-Rahman began trading. Very soon, `Abdul-Rahman ibn `Awf, who was a talented trader in Makkah, started applying his skills, amassed wealth in Madinah, and married a woman from Al-Ansar.

Among Farmers

It was narrated that when Al-Ansar asked the Prophet (PBBUH) to divide their palm trees between them and their emigrant brothers, the Prophet (PBBUH) declined such an offer. Al-Ansar made another suggestion, saying, "Spare us looking after the trees, and we will share the fruits with you." The Prophet (PBBUH) agreed to that, and Al-Muhajirun responded with, "We hear and obey."

These and similar situations manifest the sublimity of the Companions' character, both Emigrants and Supporters. Hospitality, altruism, and kindness shown generously by Al-Ansar were received with love and warm gratitude by Al-Muhajirun, who were careful not to take more than they needed and restricted themselves within the bounds of bare sufficiency.

Through this bond that transformed the values of fraternity into a reality, the Prophet (PBBUH) successfully managed to bridge the gap between all Muslims, whether they were emigrants from Makkah or supporters from Madinah, and whether they were from Al-Aws or Al-Khazraj tribe.

Thirdly: Alliance Charter between All the Citizens of Madinah

The Prophet (PBBUH) established a constitution to define and secure the rights and obligations of all the citizens of Madinah, Muslims and non-Muslims. This step followed his successful merging and uniting of the Muslims towards one creed and one vision. He (PBBUH) then turned his attention to the next priority, laying the rules to regulate the relations with the non-Muslim members of the community through a negotiated agreement shared by all the citizens of the city-state of Madinah: Makkan Emigrants, Madinan Supporters, Jews, and the *Mushrikin*. It came to be known as the Covenant of Madinah.

The main articles of the Covenant were as follows:

In the name of Allah, the Most Merciful, the Ever-Merciful. This is a document by Muhammad, the Prophet (PBBUH), (governing the relations) between the believers and Muslims of the Quraysh (emigrants from Makkah) and Yathrib (the residents of Madinah), and those who follow them, join them, and strive with them:

1. Al-Muhajirun (the Emigrants) of the Quraysh will continue, according to their established custom, to pay their blood money and ransom their captives. (This is carried out) in accordance with the recognized principles of kindness and justice among the believers.

2. Every clan of the people of Yathrib (and he, PBBUH, named their clans individually) will continue, according to their established custom, to pay their previous blood money. Every group among them shall ransom their captives in accordance with the recognized principles of kindness and justice.

3. The Allah-fearing believers shall be against whoever transgresses from among them.

4. A believer shall not kill a believer (in retaliation) for a disbeliever.

5. Whoever of the Jews follows us is entitled to support and equality. They shall not be wronged, and no help shall be given against them.

6. If there is any dispute whatsoever between you, it shall be referred to Allah (Exalted be He) and to Muhammad (PBBUH).

7. The Jews (and he, PBBUH, named their clans individually) are one community with the believers. To the Jews their religion and to the Muslims their religion. This applies to their freedmen and to themselves.

8. The Jews shall be responsible for their expenses, and the Muslims for theirs.

9. They are bound to help one another against whoever wages war against the people of this document (pact). Between them shall be good advice and counsel, and righteousness without (any form of) sin.

10. The Jews shall contribute to the cost of war so long as they are fighting alongside the believers.

11. Yathrib is inviolable for the parties involved in this document.

12. They (Muslims and Jews) shall help one another against those who attack Yathrib.

The Covenant was signed and approved by all the people of the city, Muslims and Jews alike, and Madinah became a proper state with a politically concordant community, headed by the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) himself.

The state of Islam was established with a social contract, constitutional in character, recognizing the freedom of religion and opinion, the sanctity of the state, the inviolability of property, and the prohibition of crime. This was a significant breakthrough in the political and civic life of the world at that time; a world that was overwhelmed by tyranny and injustice. In this way, the city-state of Madinah became a sanctuary for all its people. They were all responsible for defending it and stood in solidarity with each other.

The Cold Wars Between the Prophet (PBBUH) and the Jews

Even though the Jews made a covenant with the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH), they did not stop contriving plots and inciting hostilities. They did not wish for the Prophet's (PBBUH) message to spread, and his status as a religious and spiritual leader to expand, while they remained normal citizens living securely under his dominion. They were carrying on a war against him focused on two main tactics:

1. Artful disputing and questioning the truth of what the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) brought and preached.
2. Creating troubles and divisions among the Muslims.

Firstly: Stirring Up Controversy and Raising Questions

The arguments and challenges put forward by the Yathribite Jews were more sophisticated and cunning in nature than those of the Qurayshi disbelievers.

In this war, corporate intrigue, hypocrisy, and knowledge of the former prophets from previous scriptures were adeptly employed by the Jews. They foisted some of their rabbis upon the Muslim community in the guise of being followers of Islam, who soon started casting doubts and suspicions among the believers and putting many questions to the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) to try and expose faults in Islam and destabilize the belief of the Muslims.

These rabbis overburdened the Prophet (PBBUH) with questions, and Allah (Glorified be He) revealed to His Prophet (PBBUH) the answers, as obvious from several texts in the Qur'an, which read: **"They ask you about...say (to them O Muhammad)."**

On one occasion, for instance, a group of Jewish rabbis came to the Prophet (PBBUH) and said to him, "Describe to us your Lord O Muhammad, perhaps we

may believe in Him; for He has revealed His Description in the Torah. Tell us what is He made of? Does He eat and Drink? And in response Allah, Glory be to Him, revealed the Qur'anic Chapter of Al-Ikhlās (The Sincerity): “Say (O Muhammad): He is Allah, the One God, the Self-Sufficient Master. He does not beget nor is He begotten, and there is nothing equal or comparable to Him.” (Al-Ikhlās 112:1-4)

The malicious attitudes continued, including planned campaigns to provoke doubt and shake the faith of the Muslims, and all along, the Messenger (PBBUH) received assistance and answers from Allah (Exalted be He). This strengthened the Muslims in faith and certainty and reduced the cunning of the Jews to nothing, just like ashes blown away and scattered across the ground.

Secondly: Attempting to Create Conflicts between the Muslims

It was irritating for the Jews to see the Muslims, Emigrants, and Supporters, Al-Aws and Al-Khazraj, fused into one inseparable whole. They had thrived on heightening tension and provoking conflicts between the Arab tribes in Yathrib (Madinah before the Prophet's PBBUH arrival).

Such growing solidarity and coherence of all Muslims, regardless of affiliations, as dictated by Islam, was extremely detrimental to the interests of the Jews, who began to think of ways to split this unity. They realized that the brotherhood formed between Al-Muhajirun (the Emigrants from Makkah) and Al-Ansar ran deep and was impossible to break, especially as there were no previous hostilities or rivalries to work on. So they thought of reviving the spirit of tribalism and historic enmity between the two tribes of Al-Ansar: Al-Aws and Al-Khazraj.

An elderly Jewish man, by the name of Shas ibn Qais, was an irreconcilable disbeliever and extremely envious of the Muslims. He walked past a group of Muhammad's (PBBUH) followers from both tribes of Al-Aws and Al-Khazraj and felt vexed and jealous at seeing the prevalent spirit of rapport and amity enveloping the entire assembly.

Shas ordered a Jewish youth, who was with him, to go and sit among them and remind them of the Battle of Bu'ath and how great a victory it was for Al-Aws against Al-Khazraj. The youth started triggering and reviving memories of past feuds and recited some of the poetic verses which they used to compose to satirize one another, and he succeeded in his wicked endeavor.

The two parties recalled the old days, and slowly the conversation escalated into an argument and then into an attack on one another, with both sides challenging each other "to go back to those times" (i.e., to go back to war) – all for the sake of egos and tribal allegiances that Islam came to remove.

The Prophet (PBBUH) was informed of what was occurring and immediately, accompanied by some Emigrants, went out to deal with the situation. He (PBBUH) said, **“O company of Muslims! (Fear) Allah! (Fear) Allah,”** and he (PBBUH) reminded both parties of Islam through which they were rescued from disbelief and bonded together into affectionate brothers and friends. He (PBBUH) kept speaking to them and taking them back to the values of Islam until they wept, embraced one another, and sought Allah’s Forgiveness.

This was not the only occasion on which the Jews attempted to break up the Muslims. However, on every occasion, the Prophet (PBBUH) managed to realign the people and restore unity between them.

Changing the *Qiblah* Direction

While in Makkah, the Prophet (PBBUH) was ordered to pray facing Baitul-Maqdis (Al-Aqsa Mosque) in Jerusalem, so he used to pray between the two *Rukns* (two corners of Al-Ka`bah: the Black Stone and the Yemeni corner). In this way, he (PBBUH) prayed towards both *Baitul-Maqdis* and the Ka`bah.

When the Prophet (PBBUH) emigrated to Madinah, it was not possible for him to direct himself towards both, and so he (PBBUH) prayed facing towards *Baitul-Maqdis* (to the north), with the Ka`bah behind him (to the south). But his heart remained attached to the Ka`bah. He (PBBUH) would often look up at the sky, awaiting Allah's Command in this regard, and supplicate Allah (Exalted be He) to redirect the *Qiblah* (direction faced in prayer) towards the Ancient House (the Ka`bah) in Makkah, which was the direction faced by Prophet Ibrahim (Abraham PBBUH) in his prayers.

The Jews, upon hearing of this information, cunningly attempted to convince the Prophet (PBBUH) to depart to Jerusalem, as this had eventually been the destination of all the Messengers before him, after fleeing from their homelands. According to them, he (PBBUH) should follow in their footsteps if he were a real Messenger, and to merely take Madinah as a transitory residence between his emigration from Makkah to Jerusalem.

Undoubtedly, the hidden intentions behind their suggestion were clear. After the Prophet (PBBUH) had been in Madinah for nearly seventeen months, Allah (the Majestic) commanded him to face the direction of the Ka`bah, the Sacred Mosque, the same place of worship that Prophets Ibrahim and Isma`il (Ishmael PBBUH) had prayed towards. It was on this occasion that Allah (Glorified be He) revealed His Saying:

“We (Allah) have certainly seen the turning of your face (O Muhammad) toward the heaven, and We will surely turn you to a *Qiblah* with which you will be pleased. So turn your face towards Al-Masjid Al-Haram. And wherever you

(believers) are, turn your faces towards it (in prayer). Indeed, those who have been given the Scripture well know that it is the truth from their Lord. And Allah is not unaware of what they do.” (Al-Baqarah 2:144)

The Prophet (PBBUH) received the command of the change of *Qiblah* from Jerusalem to Makkah while offering the *Zuhr* (Noon) Prayer at the mosque of Banu Salamah. The Prophet (PBBUH) turned himself towards the Ka`bah during the prayer, and the entire congregation, led by him, followed him and changed direction in prayer. Since then, Banu Salamah Mosque came to be known as *Masjid Al-Qiblatayn* (the Mosque of the Two *Qiblahs*); one facing Jerusalem and the other facing Makkah.

The Jews criticized and mocked the changing of the *Qiblah* and went on to question the reasoning behind it. They even promised to follow the Prophet (PBBUH) if he reverted to Jerusalem as his *Qiblah* (which was also the *Qiblah* of the Jews). In response to this, Allah (Glorified be He) revealed His Saying:

“The foolish among the people will say, ‘What has turned them (Muslims) away from their *Qiblah*, which they used to face?’ Say, ‘To Allah belongs the east and the west. He guides whom He wills to a straight path.’” (Al-Baqarah 2:142)

Challenges from the Outside

The above circumstances are an example of a variety of obstacles that the Prophet (PBBUH) faced from inside Madinah, and the way he (PBBUH) handled each situation with utmost wisdom and good judgement. It needs to be noted here that, unlike previous prophets and messengers, Muhammad (PBBUH) was the only prophet who had to look after not only the religious but also the worldly matters necessary to build and develop the earth.

External Challenges Faced from Inside Madinah:

1. The Prophet's (PBBUH) heart was strongly attached to Makkah and the Ka`bah; the same was true for his Companions, who had left behind their homes and possessions there.

2. The Quraysh's rage never subsided; their hate towards Islam intensified over time, especially as the Muslims were building a haven and a country of their own. The Quraysh's increasing exasperation and anxiety stemmed from two main causes:

- The Muslims were becoming strong and protected in Madinah, through which the Quraysh's main trade route to the Levant passed. This would negatively impact their trade and economy.
- The Muslims were growing in number and force and could one day attack the Quraysh and return to their homeland.

The Quraysh's Attempt at Assassinating the Prophet (PBBUH) in Madinah

The Quraysh began to scheme to assassinate the Prophet (PBBUH). They established secret contact with `Abdullah ibn Ubai Salul who, before the

Prophet's (PBBUH) arrival, was about to be designated as president of Al-Aws and Al-Khazraj tribes.

They wrote to `Abduallah ibn Ubai ibn Salul and his polytheist supporters, saying, "You have given protection to our companion. We swear by Allah that you should either fight him or expel him, or we shall march against you in full force until we kill your fighters and appropriate your women."

On receiving this letter, `Abdullah ibn Ubai and his followers resolved to gather together and fight against the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH). News of their plan reached the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH), and he went out and directly confronted them with it. He (PBBUH) said, **"The threat of the Quraysh towards you has worked its worst upon you. They cannot contrive a plot against you greater than what you have intended against yourselves. Do you want to kill your own sons and brothers?"**

After hearing the Prophet's (PBBUH) words, the followers of `Abdullah ibn Ubai dispersed and gave up the idea of carrying out the revolt. `Abdullah bin Ubai refrained from going on with the plot on the grounds of the cowardice of his party, but he found a strategic ally in the Quraysh and the Jewish members of his community, as later events would reveal.

The Quraysh Announce Their Intention to Prohibit Muslims from Visiting Al-Ka`bah

Sa`d ibn Mu`adh came to Makkah to perform `Umrah (minor pilgrimage). He stayed at the house of his friend Umaiya ibn Khalaf, who used to stay at Sa`d's house when he passed through Madinah.

Sa`d asked Umaiya to accompany him to the sanctuary at a time when it would be empty, and they went out at midday.

As Sa`d circumambulated the Ka`bah with Umaiya ibn Khalaf, Abu Jahl met them and accosted Sa`d, saying, "I see you wandering about safely in

Makkah even though you have given shelter to apostates (meaning the Muslims) and have claimed that you will help them and support them. By Allah, if you were not in the company of Abu Safwan, you would not return to your family safe and sound.”

Sa`d, raising his voice, said to him, “By Allah, if you prevent me from this (i.e., performing circumambulation of the Ka`bah), I will prevent you from something more important to you, that is, your (trade) passageway through Madinah (to the Levant).”

Abu Jahl’s menacing words indicated the Quraysh’s intentions to ban Muslims from visiting the Sacred house, and their readiness to harm unprotected Muslims. The disbelievers of Makkah also sent a threat to the Muslims of Madinah that said, “Do not be deluded by your escape from us to Yathrib. We shall certainly come to you and annihilate you, and your whole community, inside your own houses.”

Permission to Fight

When the tyranny of the Makkans reached its climax and the situation became dangerously threatening to the lives of the Muslims, and it was obvious that the Quraysh would not break out of the stupor of their oppression and haughtiness and regain their common sense, Allah, the Most High, revealed permission for the Muslims to fight, in the following Qur’anic verses:

“Permission (to fight) is granted to those being fought, because they have been wronged. Indeed, Allah is Able to give them victory. (They are) those who have been expelled from their homes unjustly only because they said, ‘Our Lord is Allah.’ For had it not been that Allah checks one set of people by means of another, monasteries, churches, synagogues, and Masjids (mosques), wherein Allah’s Name is often mentioned, would surely have been pulled down. And Allah will surely support those who support Him (His Religion). Indeed, Allah is Powerful and Exalted in Might.” (Al-Hajj 22:39-40)

A Necessary Question: Did Islam Spread by the Sword?

Several opponents of Islam and Muslims have accused Islam of spreading through force and by the sword, although actual happenings prove the contrary. There are numerous examples and proof that Islam did not spread by the sword but, rather, through sincere belief in its message and the good impression left by the character of the early Muslims and callers to Islam.

The evidence of the peaceful nature of this message is that when Allah (Glorified be He) gave the believers the right to fight against those who fight them, He ordered them not to transgress any ethical boundaries: “*And fight in the Way of Allah those who fight you, but transgress not the limits. Truly, Allah likes not the transgressors.*” (Al-Baqarah 2:190)

Allah also says in this regard: “*And if you punish (your enemy, O Muslims), then punish them with the like of that with which you were afflicted. But if you endure patiently, verily, it is better for those who are patient.*” (Al-Nahl 16:126)

In interpreting the previous Qur’anic verse, eminent scholar, Sheikh Metwali Al-Sha`rawy (may Allah have mercy on him) said: “If someone gives you a slap on the face and you want to punish him for assaulting you, you should give him an equal slap – like-for-like, and not an iota more. But mind: if you choose to do so, what makes you sure that you will be able to exercise control over yourself and over the force of the slap; for if you inflict on him a harder slap – regardless of how much more – you become a transgressor, and Almighty Allah dislikes all transgressors. Hence, it is best to be patient, and this is what Allah (Exalted be He) has advised you to do and is most pleased with: ‘... verily, it is better for those who are patient.’”

Moreover, Allah’s Words say: “*There is no compulsion in religion. Verily, the Right Path has become distinct from the wrong path. Whoever disbelieves in false gods and believes in Allah, then they have grasped the most trustworthy*

handhold that will never break. And Allah is All-Hearer, All-Knower.” (Al-Baqarah 2:256)

This Qur’anic verse is a clear command not to force anyone to become Muslim, as stressed by the way the Prophet (PBBUH) treated the Jews. He (PBBUH) left for them the freedom of belief and practice of their religious rites, as laid down in the Constitution of Madinah.

However, the Prophet’s (PBBUH) mission was not restricted within the boundaries of Madinah but extended far beyond, to the entire world. The core objective of the Prophet (PBBUH) and his Companions was to deliver Allah’s Message to all humankind. This was why he (PBBUH) needed to reach out to people and speak with them directly, which was an aim that the Quraysh had tried hard to prevent.

The Prophet (PBBUH) used to always say to the Quraysh, **“Do not stand between me and the people.”** In other words, to let him speak freely and openly to the people and convey His Lord’s Message and leave every person the choice to either believe in it or reject it, unhindered by any preconceptions, and without compulsion to do either.

Far from allowing such freedom to their community, the Quraysh were using all their power to stop the Prophet (PBBUH) and Islam altogether. They continuously posed threats and escalated their attacks on the Muslims, forcing them to defend themselves.

The Prophet's (PBBUH) Confrontation Strategy against the Quraysh

In the face of ongoing threats and attempts by the Quraysh to destabilize Madinah and incite the neighboring Bedouins against the Muslims, the Prophet (PBBUH) devised practical countermeasures to repress the aggressiveness of the Quraysh and enhance the security and status of the City.

The Prophet (PBBUH) did this by establishing strategic control over the route taken by the Quraysh on their commercial travels to the Levant. He (PBBUH) worked to accomplish this through two channels:

Firstly, by making covenants with the tribes that lived along the trade route, which obliged them either to assist the Muslims or not to attack them. In this way, the Prophet (PBBUH) achieved security from tribes outside Madinah and developed good relationships with them.

Secondly, by dispatching regular delegations along the trade route [to serve as patrols to protect the outskirts of Madinah, and stay alert to any suspicious persons or activities in the area and spread the message of Islam].

Expeditions before the Battle of Badr

After being granted the order and permission by Allah to defend and fight against oppressors, the military activities began, which were akin to patrols. Their primary objectives were to:

1. Explore and understand the terrain nearby and on the outskirts of the city, and to become familiar with the roads surrounding Madinah and leading to Makkah.
2. Build alliances and treaties with the tribes dwelling on those roads.

3. Convey a message to the polytheists and the Jews of Madinah, as well as the Bedouins in its vicinity, that the Muslims had become strong and were able to defend themselves if needed.

4. Warn the Quraysh that their reckless attacks and abusive behavior were putting their trade routes at risk; that the only way to avoid the exacerbation of this danger to their economy was for them to choose peace, and to refrain from any intention of fighting the Muslims and hindering people from Allah's Path.

These minor expeditions and patrols were undertaken by Al-Muhajirun (Emigrants from Makkah) at first, and later by both Al-Muhajirun and Al-Ansar (Supporters from Madinah). Some were led by the Prophet (PBBUH) himself (in which case they were termed in Arabic '*Ghazawat*'; sing. *Ghazwah*), and others were dispatched by the Prophet (PBBUH) under the leadership of one of his Companions (in which case they were termed '*Saraya*'; sing. *Sariyya*).

1. The *Sariyya* (Squadron) of Saif Al-Bahr

In the month of Ramadan in the year 1 A.H., the Prophet (PBBUH) dispatched thirty men from Al-Muhajirun, under the command of Hamzah ibn `Abdul-Muttalib (RA), to intercept a commercial caravan returning from the Levant. It belonged to the Quraysh (and contained the property and valuables of which the Muslims had been dispossessed in Makkah, including their own successful businesses in the caravan-trade industry).

The caravan consisted of three hundred men, led by Abu Jahl ibn Hisham. The two parties met near the Red Sea coast, on the outskirts of Al-`Ais. They lined up ready to fight when an Arabian leader by the name of Majdi ibn `Amr Al-Juhani, who was an ally of both sides, intervened between them. He managed to prevent the fighting.

2. The *Sariyya* of Rabigh

In the month of Shawwal in the year 1 A.H., the Prophet (PBBUH) dispatched sixty men from Al-Muhajirun, under the command of `Ubaydah ibn Al-Harith, to a valley called Rabigh.

They encountered Abu Sufyan ibn Harb, who had two hundred riders with him. The two sides exchanged arrow shots, but no other fighting took place.

3. The *Sariyya* of Al-Kharrar

In the month of Dhul-Qa`dah in the year 1 A.H., the Prophet (PBBUH) dispatched twenty men, under the command of Sa`d ibn Abu Waqqas, to intercept a commercial caravan of the Quraysh.

They set out on foot, marching at night and hiding during the day until they reached the valley of Al-Kharrar. However, they missed the caravan, which had passed by that place the previous day, and so no fighting took place.

4. The *Ghazwah* (Expedition) of Al-Abwa' (or Waddan)

In the month of Safar in the year 2 A.H., the Prophet (PBBUH) personally headed an expedition of seventy men from Al-Muhajirun to intercept a commercial caravan of the Quraysh, appointing, in his absence, Sa`d ibn `Ubadah in charge of the affairs of the city. The Prophet (PBBUH) marched with his men until they reached Waddan, a valley between Makkah and Madinah. When they got there, the caravan had already passed by that place, so no confrontation or fighting took place.

In the course of this expedition, the Prophet (PBBUH) concluded an alliance treaty for mutual cooperation and security with `Amr ibn Makhshi Al-Damri, the leader of Banu Damrah.

5. The *Ghazwah* of Buwat

In the month of Rabi` Al-Awwal in the year 2 A.H., the Prophet (PBBUH) set out with two hundred of his Companions to intercept a caravan of the Quraysh led by Umayyah ibn Khalaf. By the time the Prophet (PBBUH) reached Buwat, the caravan had left, so no fighting took place.

The Prophet (PBBUH) returned with his Companions to Madinah. Of course, these several unsuccessful attempts showed that the Quraysh were taking very serious precautions and measures to prevent any information about them or their caravans reaching Madinah.

6. The *Ghazwah* of Safwan (the Minor Battle of Badr)

A short while after returning from Buwat, in the month Rabi` Al-Awwal in the year 2 A.H., a Qurayshi man known as Kurz ibn Jabir Al-Fihri, along with a few polytheists, raided the pastures of Madinah and drove away some of the livestock.

The Prophet (PBBUH) left Zaid ibn Harithah in charge of Madinah and set out at the head of seventy men in pursuit of them. They continued in their pursuit as far as a valley near Badr called Safwan. However, they failed to catch up with Kurz and his group and returned to Madinah without fighting.

This attack was a preliminary to the Battle of Badr and came to be known as the Minor Battle of Badr.

7. The *Ghazwah* of Dhill-`Ushairah

In the month of Jumada Al-Awwal in the year 2 A.H., the Prophet (PBBUH) set out with one hundred and fifty men from Al-Muhajirun to intercept a caravan of the Quraysh that was heading for the Levant, after receiving news of its departure from Makkah. But, again, when the Prophet (PBBUH) reached Al-`Ushairah (in the vicinity of Yanbu`), the caravan had already left that destination a few days before.

This was the same caravan which the Prophet (PBBUH) would set out to pursue on its return from the Levant and was the direct reason for the great Battle of Badr.

During this expedition, the Prophet (PBBUH) concluded a non-aggression treaty with Banu Mudlij, the allies of Banu Damrah, with whom he (PBBUH) had formed an alliance during the expedition of Al-Abwa`.

8. The *Sariyya* of Nakhlah (Under the Command of `Abdullah ibn Jahsh)

At the end of the month of Rajab in the year 2 A.H., the Prophet (PBBUH) used a new technique to ensure the secrecy of the squadron's mission. It was based on the expedition proceeding without anyone, even its leader, knowing its ultimate destination until after reaching a certain point, where the person in command was instructed to open a sealed letter with further directions from the Prophet (PBBUH) on the route for completing the required journey.

Following the new tactic, the Prophet (PBBUH) dispatched a squadron of eight men from Al-Muhajirun, under the command of `Abdullah ibn Jahsh Al-Asady, with secret instructions contained in a sealed letter that was not to be opened until after traveling for two complete days.

After marching for two days, `Abdullah opened the letter. It read: **“When you read this letter of mine, proceed until you halt at (the valley of) Nakhlah, between Makkah and Al-Ta’if. Observe the caravan of the Quraysh (there) and gather for us information about them.”** According to the letter, it was purely a reconnaissance assignment.

`Abdullah informed his companions of the letter's content; that, on the orders of the Prophet (PBBUH), they were to proceed to Nakhlah (close to Makkah) to monitor the Quraysh's movements.

The Prophet (PBBUH) also instructed that no one should be forced to participate against his will (because of the gravity of the mission due to the proximity of Nakhlah to Makkah; therefore, participation should be completely voluntary).

Preparedness and willingness were shown by all expedition members, and they carried on with the mission. On the way, Sa`d ibn Abu Waqqas and `Utbah ibn Ghazwan lost their riding-camel, which they rode by turns. They had to fall behind the rest of the group to search for it. Thus, the squadron was reduced by two men.

The Day of Doubt

`Abdullah ibn Jahsh continued with the rest of the men until they reached the specified spot – Nakhlah. Then, a Qurayshi caravan carrying raisins, foodstuff, and merchandise passed by them. Among those traveling with the caravan were `Amr ibn Al-Hadhrami, `Uthman and Nawfal, the two sons of `Abdullah ibn Al-Mughirah, and Al-Hakam ibn Kaysan, the freed slave of Hisham ibn Al-Mughirah.

On seeing them, the Muslims started consulting one another to make a shared decision about how to proceed. They were not certain whether it was the first day of Sha`ban or the last day of Rajab¹, which was one of the four Sacred Months in which bloodshed and fighting was prohibited by Arab tradition.

The men of the expedition debated among themselves that if they left them, by nightfall they would be inside the sacred precincts [where fighting was forbidden on holy grounds]. At last, they agreed to fight them. They shot and killed `Amr ibn Al-Hadrami with an arrow, captured `Uthman and Al-Hakam

¹ The lunar months alternate between 29 and 30 days; hence, the actual lunar month may start a day earlier or later than predicted. In clearer words, sometimes the last day of Rajab may be the first day of Sha`ban.

ibn Kaysan, seized the caravan's goods, and headed back to Madinah. Nawfal escaped and fled to Makkah.

The Prophet (PBBUH) Disapproves of the Expedition Fighting in the Sacred Month

`Abdullah ibn Jahsh and the other members of the expedition arrived in Madinah with the two captives and the caravan's goods, but the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) was displeased with what they had done. They were under no orders to fight.

The Prophet (PBBUH) said to them, **“I did not order you to fight in the sacred month,”** and he (PBBUH) suspended any action regarding the two captives and the caravan and refused to accept any share of the booty. This put the men of the expedition in a very critical situation. Their actions received further rebuke from their fellow Muslims in Madinah.

The Quraysh Quickly Exploit the Incident

The *Mushrikin* of the Quraysh saw this as a golden opportunity to cast a disgraceful image upon the Muslims and accuse them of desecrating what Allah (Exalted be He) had declared inviolable. The Muslims who were in Makkah argued that the attack on the caravan had taken place due to doubt about whether it was the first day of Sha`ban (rather than the last day of Rajab). But the Quraysh persisted with their propaganda that Muhammad (PBBUH) and his Companions claimed to be following obedience to Allah (Glorified be He) yet were the first to violate the sacred month.

As people increasingly spoke about the issue, a Qur'anic revelation descended upon the Prophet (PBBUH), settling the matter. Allah's Response showed that the tumult created by the Makkan disbelievers was groundless. Of all people, the Quraysh had no right to talk about sanctities and sacred

obligations – fighting in the sacred month paled in comparison to the crimes they themselves committed against the Muslims. Allah (Exalted be He) says:

“They ask you about fighting in the Sacred Months¹. Say, ‘Fighting therein is grave (transgression) but graver (transgression) with Allah is to prevent humankind from following Allah’s Way, to disbelieve in Him, to prevent access to *Al-Masjid-al-Haram* (the Sacred Mosque at Makkah), and to drive out its inhabitants; and *Al-Fitnah*² (persecution and hindering people from Allah’s Religion) is worse than killing.’” (Al-Baqarah 2:217)

Allah’s Statement confirmed that fighting during the sacred month would be a great transgression indeed, but at the same time it declared that to prevent humankind from following Allah’s Way and make people disbelieve in Him, to prohibit access to His Sacred Mosque, and to unceasingly harm and persecute the Muslims until they were forced to forsake their homeland, Makkah, would be the greater sin and transgression with Almighty Allah. Thus, Allah’s Verdict clearly showed that the disbelievers of the Quraysh, through their disbelief and tyranny, were the major aggressors.

The revelation of this Qur’anic verse brought great relief to the Muslims who were involved in the expedition of Nakhlah and delivered them from their predicament. Following this, the Quraysh sent to ransom their two captives, `Uthman ibn `Abdullah and Al-Hakam ibn Kaysan. The Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) replied to them, **“We will not accept your ransom until our two companions return.”**

After the safe return of Sa`d ibn Abu Waqqas and `Utbah ibn Ghazwan, the two members who had lagged behind the expedition searching for their lost camel, the Prophet (PBBUH) accepted the Quraysh’s ransom for their captives

¹ The 1st, 7th, 11th, and 12th months of the Islamic calendar.

² *Al-Fitnah* refers to a persecution situation in which the believers are harassed and intimidated because of their religious convictions. The Qur’anic verse declares that trying to force the believers to renounce their religion and revert to disbelief is worse with Allah (Exalted be He) than killing.

and released them¹. He (PBBUH) paid blood money to the family of the Qurayshi man who was killed.

These small operations and expeditions had accomplished their goals, which were to improve relations with the neighboring tribes and to establish military and strategic alliances with them. An additional significant objective that was achieved was to send a strong message to the Quraysh that the Muslims were able to stand up for themselves and had become strong enough to pose a threat to the Quraysh's much-prized trade routes, as evident from the expedition led by `Abdullah ibn Jahsh. Only then was the true extent of the power the Muslims represented fully revealed to the Quraysh; the Muslims were able to approach Makkah and attack and capture their men.

The Quraysh, far from seeking a warning in what had happened and reaching out for a truce and peace with the Muslims [as Banu Mudlij and Banu Damrah had done], became adamant about the destruction of Islam. Their rage and spite escalated into a desire for the total annihilation of Muslims in their homeland. It was this reckless and abusive use of power that carried the Quraysh to the Battle of Badr – the most important battle in the history of Islam.

¹ Al-Hakam ibn Kaysan, one of the two captives, embraced Islam and became a good Muslim and stayed in Madinah with the Messenger of Allah (PBUH) until he was killed as a martyr on the Day of Bi'r Ma'unah. As for `Uthman ibn `Abdullah, he went back to Makkah and died there as a disbeliever.

The Battle of Badr

Preliminaries to the Battle

The Battle of Badr occurred near the end of Sha`ban in the year 2 A.H. As seen previously, in the long process of leaving Makkah for Madinah, the Muslims had been persecuted and abused, their properties had been plundered, their homes had been seized, their trades had been taken over, and they had been driven out of their homeland. They wanted to confiscate a large Qurayshi caravan to compensate them for the grievances and losses they experienced when forced by the Quraysh to escape as emigrants to Madinah.

These unstable circumstances set in motion a milestone event. A great trade caravan of the Quraysh, headed by Abu Sufyan, had left Makkah for the Levant. It consisted of about one thousand camels laden with valuable merchandise worth about fifty thousand dinars, with only a meagre guard of around forty armed men.

The caravan belonged to all the men of the Quraysh except for Huwaytib ibn `Abdul-`Uzza (which was the reason he did not participate in Badr), and this made it of interest to all the people of Makkah. If lost, it would deal a heavy military, political, and economic blow to all of the Quraysh.

As stated earlier in the *Ghazwah* of Dhill-`Ushairah, the Prophet (PBBUH) had set out in Jumada Al-Awwal of the year 2 A.H. to intercept that same caravan on its way from Makkah to the Levant, but the caravan escaped that attempt. When the return journey of that caravan from the Levant drew near, the Prophet (PBBUH) dispatched Talhah ibn `Ubaidullah and Sa`id ibn Zaid to gather information about its movements. Both men camped at Hawra' (in Syria) where they stayed until they saw the Qurayshi caravan, led by Abu Sufyan, pass by them. They immediately went back to the Prophet (PBBUH) in Madinah with this news.

The Qurayshi caravan returning from a profitable trade trip provided an opportunity for the Muslims to make up for the possessions and wealth they were forced, by oppression, to give up in Makkah. Upon hearing that the Qurayshi caravan was coming close to Madinah, the Prophet (PBBUH) announced to the Muslims, **“This is the caravan of the Quraysh carrying their property. Go out to it. Maybe Allah will grant it to you as booty.”** [Since all belongings of the Muslims were seized by the Makkans following their emigration to Madinah].

Participation was thus left voluntary and not made binding on everyone by the Prophet (PBBUH). Some Muslims responded and started preparing themselves, while others did not, thinking it would be just a small-scale mission like the previous expeditions, without a full-scale battle involved.

The Prophet (PBBUH) Goes Out to Badr

The Prophet (PBBUH) left Madinah at the head of over three hundred and ten of his Companions¹ to intercept the Qurayshi caravan led by Abu Sufyan on its way back to Makkah.

The Muslims were ill-equipped and poorly armed. They were completely unaware of what they were going to encounter, as no serious fighting was expected. They had only two horses, one belonging to Al-Zubair ibn Al-`Awwam and the other to Al-Miqdad ibn Al-Aswad Al-Kindi, and seventy camels. So, three or four persons were taking turns to ride on one camel. The Prophet (PBBUH) was no exception, sharing a camel with `Ali ibn Abu Talib and Marthad ibn Abu Marthad Al-Ghanawi.²

¹ Between three hundred and thirteen or three hundred and seventeen men; eighty-two to eighty-six were from Al-Muhajirun (the Emigrants from Makkah) and two hundred and thirty-one were from Al-Ansar (the Supporters from Madinah), of whom sixty-one were from Al-Aws, and a hundred and seventy from Al-Khazraj.

² It was narrated that when it was the turn of the Prophet (PBUH) to walk, they said, “We will walk in your place,” but he (PBUH) replied, **“Neither of you are stronger than me, nor am I in less need of reward (from Allah) than you.”**

Before leaving for Badr, the Prophet (PBBUH) had entrusted the affairs of Madinah and the leadership of prayers to `Abdullah ibn Umm Maktum (a blind honorable Companion). Later, when the army reached a place called Rawha', the Prophet (PBBUH) sent back Abu Lubabah ibn `Abdul-Mundhir to Madinah, having appointed him as its temporary governor. He (PBBUH) gave the flag of general command, which was white, to Mus`ab ibn `Umair. The General Commander-in-Chief was, of course, the Prophet (PBBUH).

The Muslim Army's Path

On the twelfth of Ramadan in the year 2 A.H., the Prophet (PBBUH) marched out with his men in the direction of Makkah, passing through Al-`Aqiq and then Dhul-Hulayfah. He (PBBUH) proceeded along the main road between Madinah and Makkah until, upon arriving at Al-Munsaraf, he (PBBUH) diverted off the main Makkan road onto the road running right, towards Al-Naziyah, heading for Badr.

The Prophet (PBBUH) continued on that path for some distance until he had crossed a valley called Ruhqan, situated between Al-Naziyah and the strait of Al-Safra'. When he (PBBUH) was close to Al-Safra', he (PBBUH) sent Basbas ibn `Amr Al-Juhani and Abu Al-Zaghba' Al-Juhani to scout for information about Abu Sufyan and his caravan. Then he (PBBUH) rode on until he halted near a valley called Zafirah.

Abu Sufyan Takes Caution

Abu Sufyan, on his part, stayed on his guard, well aware that the road back to Makkah was perilous. He kept cautiously gathering information and questioning the riders on the latest news. Upon entering the area of Hijaz (western Arabia), he asked almost every rider he came across about any movement from the Muslims. Finally, he received news from some travellers that Muhammad (PBBUH) had mobilized his Companions to intercept his caravan.

To be on the safe side, Abu Sufyan took quick action and hired a man by the name of Damdam ibn `Amr Al-Ghifari to go to Makkah and alert the Quraysh that Muhammad (PBBUH) and his Companions had set off to intercept their caravan and urge them to march out to protect their wealth. Damdam rushed off to Makkah to give this alarm and summon the Quraysh's aid.

The Vision Seen by `Atikah bint `Abdul-Muttalib

Three nights before the arrival of Damdam, `Atikah, the daughter of `Abdul-Muttalib, had a horrifying dream that portended evil for the Makkans. In her dream, she saw a rider approaching on his camel until he halted at Al-Abtah valley (north of Makkah). There he shouted at the top of his voice, "Hasten to your deaths, O you people of treachery, within three days' time!"

`Atikah then saw the people gathering around the rider, and he entered the mosque with the people following him. While they were gathered around him, his camel climbed on top of the Ka`bah with him on its back. He shouted at the top of his voice, as he had before, "Hasten to your deaths, O you people of treachery, within three days' time!" Then his camel climbed to the summit of Mount Abu Qubais (northeast of Makkah) with him on its back, and he shouted the same cry. Then he picked up a rock and hurled it down the mountain. On reaching the foot of the mountain, the rock shattered into fragments, and a piece of it went into every house and dwelling in Makkah.

The next morning, `Atikah sent for her brother, Al-`Abbas ibn `Abdul-Muttalib, and said to him, "Brother, I had a vision last night that terrified me. I fear that it forebodes evil and adversity for your people, so keep what I am going to tell you a secret." After recounting to him her dream, Al-`Abbas said, "By Allah, this is indeed a true vision. You had better conceal it and not mention it to anyone."

`Atikah's Vision Spreads with Speed Across Makkah and Abu Jahl Mocks it

Al-`Abbas met with his friend Al-Walid ibn `Utbah and could not restrain himself from mentioning `Atikah's dream to him. Al-`Abbas asked him to keep it a secret, yet Al-Walid told it to his father, `Utbah. Very soon, the dream became common knowledge in the Makkan circles, and all the Quraysh were talking about it.

On the morning, Al-`Abbas went to circumambulate the Ka`bah. Abu Jahl was seated there with some Qurayshi men discussing `Atikah's dream. When Abu Jahl saw Al-`Abbas, he said to him, "O sons of `Abdul-Muttalib, since when was there among you a female prophet?"

Al-`Abbas asked, "What are you talking about?"

Abu Jahl replied, "The dream which `Atikah had." He continued, "O sons of `Abdul-Muttalib, are you not satisfied with your men claiming to be prophets, that your women also claim to be prophets? `Atikah claims that in her dream someone said: Hasten to your deaths within three days' time! We shall be awaiting you these three days; if what she predicts comes true, so be it. But if the three days pass and nothing of this happens, we will put it in writing that your family (Banu Hashim) are the greatest liars among the Arabs."

Damdam Arrives in Makkah

The whole city was on edge during these three days, and on the third day, Damdam ibn `Amr arrived (a crier upon a camel, as `Atikah had predicted). Before entering Makkah, he added some dramatic effects to his appearance to draw attention and evoke emotions. He cut off the ears and nose of his camel, turned its saddle back to front, and tore the front and back of his own shirt. Then he stood on the back of his camel and shouted out as loudly as he could, "O people of the Quraysh, the caravan! The caravan! Your wealth with Abu Sufyan

is being intercepted by Muhammad and his Companions. I do not think you will arrive in time to save it. Help! Help!”

The People of Makkah Get Mobilized and Stirred to War

Upon hearing the shouts of Damdam, Abu Jahl started speaking and inciting the people near the Ka`bah to war. The Makkans hastily prepared and equipped themselves for the battle. They said, “Do Muhammad and his Companions think this is going to be like the caravan of Ibn Al-Hadrami? (Referring to the Nakhlah expedition led by `Abdullah ibn Jahsh in which `Amr ibn Al-Hadrami was killed.) By Allah, they shall see that it is quite different.”

Fears lingered within the people of Makkah that the remainder of `Atikah’s dream would also come true, however the momentum for war was too strong and unstoppable. Abu Jahl and `Amir ibn Al-Hadrami (whose brother had been killed in the Nakhlah expedition) kept rallying the people to war.

Everybody participated, either personally or by delegating other men to fight on their behalf. None of the notables of the Quraysh stayed behind except for Abu Lahab. He sent in his place Al-`As ibn Hisham in return for cancelling a debt of four thousand dinars that Hisham owed him.

Another prominent leader of the Quraysh, Umayyah ibn Khalaf, decided to stay behind from fighting. Abu Jahl, on learning of his decision, tried to dissuade him, saying, “O Abu Safwan, once the people see you have stayed behind even though you are the chief of the people of the valley, they will stay behind with you.” But Umayyah ibn Khalaf refused to change his mind.

`Uqbah ibn Abu Mu`ait then came to him while he was sitting in the mosque with some of his people. He was carrying a censer with lit embers and incense in it, which he placed before him and said, “Here, Abu `Ali, scent yourself, for you are one of the women.” Abu Jahl was with him carrying a pot of kohl and a kohl stick, which he handed to Umayyah ibn Khalaf and said, “Put

on kohl, O Abu `Ali, for you are one of the women.” Umayyah was thus provoked by their insults to join the Makkan army that was preparing to leave for the battle.

The Strength of the Makkan Army

The Makkan army, in contrast to the Muslim army, was well equipped with men, horses, and arms. It consisted of around one thousand three hundred warriors (outnumbering the Muslim army almost three-fold), and had one hundred or two hundred horses, six hundred shields, and a large number of camels. It marched towards Madinah with great pomp and show.

The Quraysh Fear the Renewal of Their Hostilities with Banu Bakr

When the Quraysh had finished their preparations and decided to march out, they remembered the old enmity and warfare that existed between them and the tribe of Banu Bakr. They feared that, on that account, they could seize the opportunity and attack them from the rear. If this happened, they would find themselves caught between a rock and a hard place.

Such apprehensions almost caused them to become discouraged and go back, when one of the chiefs of Kinanah appeared to them. According to references, it was Satan. He came to them in the form of Suraqah ibn Malik ibn Ju`shum Al-Mudliji, one of the chiefs of the tribe of Banu Kinanah. He gave them a guarantee of protection and made them feel safe from this side. And so the Quraysh regained their courage and set off for war. [By the departure of the Makkans for Badr, the rest of `Atikah's dream was being fulfilled.]

The Marching Forth of the Makkan Army

The Quraysh departed their homeland in the morning and moved northward to Badr, swiftly and in an arrogant stride, as described by the Prophet's (PBBUH) words: **“Here come the Quraysh, with their vanity and pride, contending with You (O Allah) and calling Your Messenger a liar.”**

Their drive for war was fueled by deep-seated prejudice, resentment, and rage towards the Prophet (PBBUH) and his Companions for daring to pose a threat to their caravan.

They advanced in great speed towards Badr, crossing the valley of `Usfan, then Qudaid, then Al-Juhfah, and then Al-Abwa`. Abu Jahl was the general commander and the flag-bearer of the Makkan army.

Food provision for the army was undertaken by nine Qurayshi noblemen. Each day one of them was responsible for slaughtering nine to ten of his own camels to feed the soldiers.

The Prophet (PBBUH) Learns of the Quraysh's Advance

Headed by the Prophet (PBBUH), the Muslim army advanced until they reached the valley of Zafirah, where they received news that a Makkan army had set out to reinforce Abu Sufyan's caravan.

At this point, the situation took a completely different turn. For the Muslims, the confrontation was no longer against Abu Sufyan and a caravan guarded by forty armed men, but against the entire city of Makkah that had come out to fight.

The Difficult Position of the Muslim Army

The situation was becoming critical for the Muslims. They were faced with a challenging situation and had to make some quick and serious decisions.

If, on the one hand, they moved ahead and seized Abu Sufyan's caravan, they would soon be overtaken and defeated by the Quraysh, given their overall superiority in numbers and arms. And in the end, the caravan would fall back into the hands of the Quraysh.

If, on the other hand, the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) returned to Madinah, this would constitute a withdrawal in the eyes of the Quraysh and the Jews of Madinah. They would become emboldened against him (PBBUH) and the Muslims. The Jews of Madinah could subject the Muslims to the same hardships and privations they endured at the hands of the Quraysh in Makkah. In no way would the truth prevail after this, nor would Allah (Glorified be He) give supremacy to His Religion through them.

The Muslim Advisory Council

In light of the sudden escalation of the situation, the Prophet (PBBUH) held an advisory military meeting. He (PBBUH) apprised his Companions of the new developments and exchanged viewpoints with them about how to deal with the Quraysh's impending military action, for which the Muslims were not adequately prepared, as they had not left Madinah to fight a war.

The Response of Al-Muhajirun

Abu Bakr (RA) first rose and spoke words of supportive encouragement, as did `Umar ibn Al-Khattab (RA). Then, a very steadfast attitude that contributed notably to resolve the tense situation was displayed by Al-Miqdad ibn `Amr, who rose and said, "O Messenger of Allah, proceed as Allah (Exalted be He) has commanded you, and we are with you. By Allah, we shall not say to you as the Children of Israel said to Musa (Moses PBBUH): 'Go, you and your Lord, and fight; we are sitting (staying) right here.' Rather, we will say, 'Go, you and your Lord, and fight, and we will be fighting with you.' By the One Who has sent you with the Truth, if you were to take us even to Bark Al-Ghimad¹, we would struggle steadfastly along with you until you attained it." The Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) was pleased with Al-Miqdad's statement and spoke kind words to him and supplicated Allah (Glorified be He) to bestow good upon him.

¹ A place located in the farthest southern end of Yemen.

However, all the three leaders who spoke – Abu Bakr, `Umar, and Al-Miqdad (RA) – were from Al-Muhajirun, who only constituted a minor section of the army. It was the Ansar’s view that the Prophet (PBBUH) wanted to know.

The Response of Al-Ansar

The Prophet (PBBUH) wished to hear from the Ansar’s leaders. They were the same men who had sworn their unconditional support for him at Al-`Aqabah. They pledged to protect him from harm, as they would for their wives, children, and themselves, but the clauses of the pledge did not commit them to fighting with him outside Madinah.

Therefore, after hearing Abu Bakr, `Umar, and Al-Miqdad, the Prophet (PBBUH) said, “**Advise me, O people,**” by which he meant the Ansar in particular, who made up the bulk of his force.

Their leader, Sa`d ibn Mua`dh, discerned that and said, “By Allah, it seems you mean us, O Messenger of Allah”, to which he (PBBUH) replied in the affirmative.

Sa`d said, “We have believed in you, confirmed your truthfulness (as Allah’s Messenger), and testified that what you have brought is the truth. Based on this, we have given you our pledges and covenants that we will listen to you and obey you. Go ahead with whatever you decide, O Messenger of Allah. We are with you. By Him Who has sent you with the Truth, if you lead us headlong to that sea (i.e., the Red Sea) and plunge into it, we will plunge into it with you and not a single man of us will lag behind. Nor shall we feel any displeasure in facing the enemy with you tomorrow. We are truly patient in war and trustworthy in battle. And we hope Allah will show you something from our efforts that pleases your eyes. So march us forward (to the battlefield) with Allah’s Blessings.”

The Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) was gladdened by Sa`d’s answer. His face brightened, and his vigor became apparent as he (PBBUH) enthusiastically said,

“March on and receive the glad tidings. Verily, Allah has promised me (victory over) one of the two parties (either the caravan or the Quraysh’s army). By Allah, it is as though I am now looking at the (exact) places where those people will be killed.”

Abu Sufyan’s Flight with the Caravan

Abu Sufyan changed the traditional course taken by the caravan to avoid the route passing through Madinah while traveling back from the Levant. He left the main road and veered onto an unfrequented coastal route that lacked water resources. They had to fetch their water supply from the wells of Badr (a valley between Makkah and Madinah). Upon nearing Al-Munsarif, Abu Sufyan halted the caravan behind a sandhill south of the wells of Badr.

As already mentioned, Basbas ibn `Amr Al-Juhani and `Adi ibn Abu Al-Zaghba’ Al-Juhani had been sent ahead in quest of news about Abu Sufyan’s caravan. They knelt their camels by a hillock near the wells of Badr and brought a water-skin to draw some water when, in the vicinity of the well, they overheard two girls discussing a debt owed by one of them to the other.

The girl indebted said that the caravan was expected to arrive the next day or the day after. She would then work for them and earn enough to pay her debt. The two scouts concluded from the conversation of the two girls that the caravan would arrive within one or two days. They rode back and reported to the Prophet (PBBUH) what they had learned.

Abu Sufyan entrusted the task of gathering information to only himself. He rode on in advance of the caravan towards the wells of Badr to collect information, while being vigilant that the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) might have arrived before him. He reached the well a short time after the two Muslim scouts had departed and came across an old man called Majdi ibn `Amr Al-Juhani. He asked him, “Have you noticed anyone?” The old man replied, “I have

not seen anyone I do not know, but I saw two riders who halted their camels by that hillock, filled their water-skin with water, and then left.”

Abu Sufyan came to the spot where the two scouts he was told about had halted their camels. He picked up some camel dung left by their animals, crumbled it, and found that it contained date stones, which he recognized as the fodder used in Yathrib¹. This confirmed for Abu Sufyan that the camels belonged to Muhammad’s (PBBUH) men.

Abu Sufyan returned at once to his convoy and urged them to quickly depart the area. He altered the course of the caravan towards the coast and set off with all speed to put as much distance as possible between them and the Muslims until he had managed to escape with the caravan. When they were finally out of danger, Abu Sufyan sent word of good news to the Makkan army, which they received at Al-Juhfah where they were encamping. In his message, Abu Sufyan assured them of the caravan’s safety and asked them to return to Makkah, as there was no need for fighting.

The next morning, the Muslims were still awaiting the passage of the caravan when the news reached them that they had missed the caravan, and that it was the fighting forces of the Quraysh who were drawing closer to them.

To Fight or Not to Fight – The Quraysh Differs

After hearing Abu Sufyan’s message, a section of the Makkan army believed they should return to Makkah. Abu Jahl arrogantly refused this opinion, saying, “By Allah, we shall not go back until we have been to Badr². We will stay there for three days, slaughter camels, offer people food, drink wine, and have the female singers play music for us, so that the Arabs hear of our marching out and gathering and continue to hold us in awe.”

¹ Dates were grown in abundance in Madinah and the people fed them to their livestock.

² The location of one of the Arab seasonal gatherings where an annual market was held.

Withdrawal of the Quraysh after the escape of their caravan could be easily interpreted as fear of Muhammad (PBBUH) and his Companions. This would only increase Muhammad's (PBBUH) power and give a huge boost to the spreading of his religion, especially after the victorious expedition of `Abdullah ibn Jahsh, in which `Amr ibn Al-Hadrami was killed and captives and booty were taken from the Quraysh. However, this extreme stance of Abu Jahl was not shared by all the Makkans. Al-Akhnas ibn Shariq, an ally of Banu Zahrah, advised the members of this clan to go back; their property had been rescued, and they should not needlessly expose themselves to war. All the members of Banu Zahrah listened to his advice and went back.

Banu Hashim also showed signs of wanting to break away and go back to Makkah, but the men of the Quraysh exercised pressure on them. They taunted them on account of their blood ties with Muhammed (PBBUH). "By Allah," they said, "we know well, O Banu Hashim, that even though you have come out with us, you are inclined to Muhammad." Abu Jahl harshly added, "This group must not part from us until we return."

Both Armies Moving Closer to Each Other

The Makkan army – now one thousand men strong after the withdrawal of Banu Zahrah – proceeded from Al-Juhfah to Badr. Upon reaching the far end of the valley of Badr (on the side that was farthest from Madinah), they encamped behind a sandhill just south of Badr, which screened them from the plain of Badr.

As ordered by the Prophet (PBBUH), the Muslim army moved from Zafiran towards a huge sand dune called Al-Hannan, and encamped to the north of Badr on the near end of the valley (on the side that was nearest to Madinah).

Intelligence War Begins

The two armies encamped and took their positions. On the low region of the valley was the Prophet (PBBUH) and his Companions, and on the high

region of the valley was the Makkan army. Both of them began to gather information and intelligence on the other party.

Firstly: The Muslim Army Collecting Intelligence

The Prophet (PBBUH) himself set out to gather information, along with his Cave Companion and devoted disciple, Abu Bakr. While walking around the camp of the *Mushrikin*, they came across an old Bedouin man. The Prophet (PBBUH) asked him about the Quraysh and also about Muhammad (PBBUH) and his Companions – inquiring about both sides for more caution and secrecy and to avoid suspicion.

The old man said, “I will not inform you until you tell me who you are from.” The Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) said, **“If you tell us, we will tell you.”** The old man said, “This for that?” The Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) said, **“Yes.”**

The old man said, “I have been informed that Muhammad and his Companions set out on such-and-such a day. If the person who told me this was speaking the truth, today they should be in such-and-such a place (naming the place where the Messenger of Allah PBBUH in fact was). And I have been informed that the Quraysh set out on such-and-such a day. If the person who told me this was speaking the truth, today they should be in such-and-such a place (naming the place where the Quraysh in fact were). When the old Bedouin man had finished giving this information from which the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) was able to locate the Makkan army, he asked them, “Now, where are you from?” The Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) replied, **“We are from water.”**¹ He (PBBUH) then left him, with the old man saying, “What? From the water? Do you mean from the water (rivers) in Iraq?” Then the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) returned to his Companions.

¹ The Messenger of Allah (PBUH) meant here the fact that humans are created from water in correspondence with Allah’s Saying in Al-Anbiya’ 21:30: “And We (Allah) have made from water every living thing.”

`Ali, Al-Zubair, and Sa`d Performing an Intelligence Collection Mission

On the evening of the same day, the Prophet (PBBUH) dispatched `Ali ibn Abu Talib, Al-Zubair ibn Al-`Awwam, and Sa`d ibn Abu Waqqas, with a few other of his Companions, on an intelligence mission to the wells of Badr. Once there, they seized two young men drawing water for the Makkan army and brought them to the Prophet (PBBUH), who was standing praying. They started to question the two about Abu Sufyan's caravan, and they replied, "We are water-carriers of the Quraysh, who have sent us to fetch them water." But the Companions did not find their answers satisfactory, so they beat them and re-questioned them, hoping they belonged to Abu Sufyan and they still had a chance to catch up with the Quraysh's caravan.

Under pressure, the two young men changed their story and said they were from Abu Sufyan's caravan, and so they left them alone. When the Prophet (PBBUH) completed his prayer, he said in rebuke to his Companions, **"When they told you the truth, you beat them; and when they lied to you, you left them alone. They told the truth, by Allah. They do belong to the Quraysh."**

Makkah Giving Away Its Most Precious Chiefs

Addressing the two young men, the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) asked, **"Tell me about the Quraysh."**

They replied, "They are behind this sandhill that you see, on the far side of the valley."

He (PBBUH) asked, **"How many are there?"**

They replied, "There are many."

He (PBBUH) asked, **"How many?"**

They replied, “We do not know (their precise number).”

He (PBBUH) asked, “**How many camels do they slaughter every day?**”

They replied, “Nine or ten a day.” Since a single camel would feed one hundred men for a day, the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) estimated their number, saying, “**There are between nine hundred and a thousand.**”

He (PBBUH) then asked, “**Which of the notables of the Quraysh are among them (accompanying the army)?**”

They replied, “`Utbah ibn Rabi`ah, Shaybah ibn Rabi`ah, Abul-Bakhtari ibn Hisham, Hakim ibn Hizam, Abu Jahl ibn Hisham, Umayyah ibn Khalaf, Al-Nadr ibn Al-Harith, and Zam`ah ibn Al-Aswad.” They also named other men.

The Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) said, “**This Makkah has thrown to you the pieces of its liver** (i.e., its most prominent men or key leaders in a single place. They constituted the primary opposing force to his mission of spreading monotheism).”

Secondly: The Quraysh Collecting Intelligence

After the Quraysh encamped their forces and took their places, they dispatched `Umair ibn Wahb Al-Jumahi to assess the strength of the Muslim army. He rode his horse around the Muslim camp and reported on his return that there were approximately three hundred men. He then took another round, this time deeper into the valley, going as far as he could, to check whether there were any other men lying in ambush or as reinforcements, but he saw none – neither ambushers nor supplying forces.

Sharpening of Divisions Among the Ranks of the Quraysh

`Umair returned to the Quraysh and said, “I have found nothing, but I saw, O people of the Quraysh, she-camels carrying certain death. They are a people who have no defense or refuge except their swords. I do not think any man of

them will be killed before he has first killed one of you. And if they were to kill as many of you as you kill of them, what would be the good of life after that? So decide wisely.”

The words of `Umair reignited the rift among the Quraysh. A new wave of opposition broke out demanding that Abu Jahl lead the army back to Makkah and avoid fighting. Several leaders among the Quraysh adopted this position and a heated debate followed. But Abu Jahl and his party, rashly and without solid consideration, suppressed these opposing views.

Although the opposition ended in vain, it caused a crack among the ranks of the *Mushrikin*.

Positioning of the Muslim Army and the Counsel of Al-Hubab

Rain began falling heavily. Under the heavy rain, the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) was hastening with his army to try and secure the nearest well to Badr¹ from the direction of Madinah, before the Quraysh would get to it. He (PBBUH) successfully reached the strategic spot first and camped there with his troops. Meanwhile, the Quraysh were hampered by the heavy rainfall.

An Ansari man named Al-Hubab ibn Al-Mundhir ibn Al-Jamuh, who was well acquainted with the terrain of the region, then asked, “O Messenger of Allah, is this a place that Allah has commanded you to occupy, so that we may neither advance nor withdraw from it, or is it a matter of opinion, war tactics, and stratagem?” The Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) replied, “**Certainly, it is (as you said) a matter of opinion, war tactics, and stratagem.**”

Al-Hubab said, “O Messenger of Allah, this is not a proper place (to camp). Move with the men until we reach the well closest to the people (meaning the

¹ Badr valley lay between Makkah and Madinah. It consisted of a vast plain; its southern side was high (the farthest side from Madinah, on which the Makkan army positioned themselves), while the northern one was low and sloped (the nearest side to Madinah, on which the Muslim army positioned themselves). It contained many springs and wells at various spots that were dug into reservoirs for the use of travelers stopping there.

Quraysh), camp at it, bury all the other wells, build a reservoir on it, and fill it up with water. Then we will start fighting the people. We will have water to drink, while they will have none.”

“**You have given good counsel,**” the Prophet (PBBUH) said in appreciation of Al-Hubab’s suggestion, which he (PBBUH) began adopting at once. He (PBBUH) moved with the army to occupy the spot that Al-Hubab had advised and acted according to the rest of his plan. In this way, the water of Badr was employed as an important strategic weapon – secured under the control of the Muslims and outside the reach of the Quraysh.

Establishing the Muslim Army’s Headquarters

Preparing for all possible contingencies, after the Muslims stationed themselves at the well closest to the *Mushrikin* army, Sa`d ibn Mu`adh (RA) suggested building a structure for the Prophet (PBBUH) that would serve as his military headquarters and keep him at a safe distance from the enemy’s hands.

Sa`d said, “O Prophet of Allah, let us build a trellis (made of palm branches) for you to stay in, and we will keep your riding-camels ready (to leave if necessary). Then we will go on fighting our enemy. If Allah gives us strength and grants us victory over our enemy, that is what we desire. But if the result is otherwise (defeat), you can ride your mounts (you and your escorts) and join those of our people left behind (in Madinah). For there remained behind many people, O Prophet of Allah, who do not love you any less than we do. Had they known that you would face war, they would never have stayed behind. Allah will protect you through them. They will give you sincere counsel and strive along with you.”

Having heard Sa`d’s words, the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) thanked him and supplicated Allah to bestow good upon him. The Muslims then built the suggested structure on a raised hill, on the north-east side of the battlefield and

overlooking its arena. A squad of young men of Al-Ansar, led by Sa`d ibn Mu`adh, was also chosen to stand guard around his headquarters.

The Night Preceding the Battle

On the day preceding the battle, the Prophet (PBBUH) organized, mobilized, and boosted the confidence of his army. While pointing to certain spots, he (PBBUH) walked around the battlefield saying that at these very spots the leaders of the Quraysh would fall in the battle. **“This shall be the place of death of so-and-so tomorrow (naming one of the Qurayshi chiefs), if Allah wills; and this shall be the place of death of so-and-so tomorrow, if Allah wills...”**¹

Then, during the night, a miracle occurred.

Rainfall and Peaceful Drowsiness

As evening descended, Allah (Glorified be He) sent down rain. Despite it being the same rain for both armies, the Muslims and the Quraysh, it had significantly different impacts. The Quraysh had placed themselves on the elevated side of the valley just behind a sandhill. Heavy rain made the advance over the intervening dunes towards the battlefield difficult, tiring, and slow – given the dusty nature of the terrain they were on. It greatly hampered the movements of the Quraysh.

The same rain, on the other hand, worked favorably for the Muslims. The rain firmed up the sand under their feet, compacting the ground and making it easier to walk upon. It also provided their bodies with much-needed cleansing and replenishment and inwardly purified them of any negative thoughts (fear, terror, anxiety, doubt) cast by Satan.

¹ `Umar later said, “By Him in Whose Hand is my soul, not one of them (the Qurayshi chiefs) fell beyond the place that the Messenger of Allah (PBUH) had indicated by his hand.”

The Muslims then experienced another blessing from Allah (Exalted be He). He sent upon their hearts tranquility that brought them into a state of full restfulness and drowsiness. Soon they all fell peacefully asleep. Sleeping deeply at such a tense time, with an enormous mission lying ahead in the early morning, and having their minds and bodies be well rested and calm, to wake up energized and focused and ready was indeed a further boon from heaven.

The Qur'an relates it thus: "(Remember) when He (Allah) covered you with a slumber as a security from Him, and He caused water (rain) to descend on you from the sky, to clean you thereby and to remove from you the evil suggestions of Satan, and to strengthen your hearts, and make your feet firm thereby." (Al-Anfal 8:11)

The Day of the Battle

When dawn broke on the 17th day of Ramadan in the year 2 A.H., the Prophet (PBBUH) began motivating and lifting the morale of his troops. He (PBBUH) told them his fighting strategy and lined them up in rows, just as they lined up for prayer.

The Prophet's (PBBUH) Strategy

As was apparent, the Quraysh was superior in numbers and equipment. The army of the Quraysh had three soldiers against every Muslim man, and each of them had a horse or a camel to ride, whereas at least two-thirds of the Muslim army was fighting on foot. Based on these facts, the Prophet (PBBUH) planned the following strategy:

1. Not to initiate attacks, but instead to select a strong defensive position, remain firmly stationed in it, and wait for the enemy to come to them. This wise tactic would place the burden of initiating the attack on the Quraysh, along with the combat casualties expected to result in the event of such an attack. As is known from modern military combat studies, in order for an attack to be effective, the army that initiates the attack usually needs three or four times the number of the entrenched soldiers it is attacking. [This shrewd decision paid off, as it burdened the Quraysh with initiating the attack and thus dwindling their resources and energy early on.]
2. Not to shoot the arrows until the enemy troops advanced close enough. Then, all the archers should pull their arrows at the same time and hail down on them as many arrows as possible. A massive discharge of arrows at a relatively short range would likely inflict heavy casualties before any engagement in battle. The Prophet (PBBUH), therefore, said, **“Do not commence fighting until I order you to. When they are close enough, keep them back with a hail of arrows. And do not draw your swords until they are very close to you.”**

3. To overcome the strong cavalry force which the Quraysh possessed, but was virtually non-existent in the Muslims (they had only two horses), by keeping to their positions and the structure arranged by the Prophet (PBBUH). This prevented them from becoming encircled from the sides. In addition, commencing a massive discharge of arrows before close-quarter combat would cause the horses to panic. In this way, the threat of the horsemen would be neutralized before the fighting even started.

The Quraysh's Army Formation

The disbelievers drew up their troops in the usual infantry formation, flanked on the left and right by two cavalry wings of about one hundred horsemen each.

The Muslim's Army Formation

The Prophet (PBBUH) lined up the Muslim troops in straight, compact, parallel lines, similar to those formed in prayers, and divided them into three battalions. The Muslims had no back-up troops except for the small squad of young men who stood guard outside the Prophet's (PBBUH) headquarters.

A Heartfelt Farewell by a Soon-to-be Martyr while Preparing for the Battle

The Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) was straightening the rows of his Companions with a stick he held in his hand as everybody prepared to engage in this decisive battle.

As the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) was walking through the rows of his soldiers, he (PBBUH) passed by Sawad ibn Ghaziyah, who was not lined up properly. He (PBBUH) poked him in his stomach with the stick and said, **“Line up (with the others), O Sawad,”** to which Sawad replied, **“O Messenger of Allah, you have hurt me. Allah has indeed sent you with the truth and with justice, so allow me to get even.”**

The Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) laid bare his stomach and said, “**Get even (with me), O Sawad.**” But instead of poking back the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) in the stomach, Sawad embraced him and kissed his stomach. The Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) asked, “**What made you do this, O Sawad?**” He replied, “O Messenger of Allah, you see what is about to happen (war), and I wanted my last meeting with you (before my death) to be that my skin touches yours.” The Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) supplicated Allah to bestow good on Sawad.

The battle began, and the Companions entered into it with exceptional spirit. Their level of faith in the cause of Islam was such that they wished for only one of two things: victory or martyrdom.

The First Trigger for the Battle: Hamzah Kills Ibn `Abdul-Assad

Before the fighting broke out, a ferocious, bad-mannered man named Al-Aswad ibn `Abdul-Asad Al-Makhzumi dashed out of the ranks of the disbelievers, saying, “I swear by Allah that I shall drink from their (the Muslims’) reservoir, or destroy it, or die in the attempt.”

Hamzah ibn `Abdul-Muttalib, the Prophet’s (PBBUH) uncle, came forward against him and delivered a blow from his sword that cut off his leg. The man fell on his back, bleeding heavily. He then crawled to the reservoir and flung himself into it, desperately wanting to fulfil his oath. But Hamzah dealt him another blow that killed him inside the reservoir. He was the first to fall in the battle, and his death ignited the spark that started the fighting.

The Challenge to Single Swordfights

It was the custom of the Arabs during these times that before the start of a conclusive battle between any two armies, one or more of their chief fighters and leaders should fight a duel with their counterpart from the other side. The outcome of these duels had a significantly positive impact on the victorious side,

and, conversely, a negative impact on the defeated side. It either boosted or lowered the morale of their troops and their performance in the imminent battle.

Leaders who engaged in such single swordfights insisted that their rival be their equivalent in social status and military skill and expertise. Three notable horsemen of one family from the *Mushrikin* side – `Utbah ibn Rabi`ah, his brother Shaybah, and his son Al-Walid – stepped forward and issued a challenge to single duel combats.

Three men from the Ansar, also of the same family, came out to duel with them: `Awf and Mu`awwidh, the sons of Al-Harith (and their mother `Afra`), and `Abdullah ibn Rawahah.

The Qurayshi men asked them, “Who are you?” and the three young Ansari men replied, “A group of the Ansar.” They arrogantly responded, “We have nothing to do with you. We want our cousins (i.e., tribesmen).” Then one of the Qurayshi fighters called out, “O Muhammad, send forth against us our peers from our own tribe.”

Upon hearing this, the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) said, “**Get up, O `Ubaydah ibn Al-Harith! Get up, O Hamzah! Get up, O `Ali!**” They were all members of Banu `Abdul-Muttalib – the Prophet’s kindred. `Ubaydah, who was the eldest of them, dueled with `Utbah, Hamzah with Shaybah, and `Ali with Al-Walid.

The fights did not last long. Both Hamzah and `Ali immediately killed their adversaries. `Ubaydah and `Utbah seriously injured each other and both fell, incapacitated by their wounds. Hamzah and `Ali then helped `Ubaydah overcome his opponent. They rushed towards `Utbah and killed him outright, then bore away their wounded comrade to the ranks of the Muslims.

The single combats thus ended with the deaths of all three skilled horsemen from the *Mushrikin*, which gave an ominous start to the Makkan army and a crushing blow to the psyche of its troops.

The Muslims, on the other hand, felt boosted and uplifted, despite the injury of `Ubaydah, who sustained mortal wounds that led to his death and martyrdom several days later.

The Two Armies Finally Meet

Seeing three of their best warriors slain before them acted as the trigger point for the *Mushrikin*. They were provoked to extreme anger against the Muslims and fiercely took to the field as a single body; the battle had begun.

As ordered by the Prophet (PBBUH), the Muslims remained steadfast in their positions until the Makkan soldiers were within reach of their arrows. At this moment, the Muslim archers began shooting at them and inflicted significant casualties among their ranks, repeatedly forcing them to retreat. Despite repeated advances, attacks, and retreats, the Muslim soldiers maintained their strategy by holding firmly to their places and not chasing after the retreating enemy.

The Prophet (PBBUH) Humbly Pleading and Supplicating Allah

As the war raged on, the fighting intensified between the believers – who were a small, ill-equipped army – and the much larger and better-equipped enemy force. The Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) walked back to his small command trellis, accompanied by Abu Bakr (RA), feeling deeply anxious about the outcome of this day and the fate of Islam if victory was not achieved by the Muslims. He (PBBUH) faced the *Qiblah*, turned to Allah (Glorified be He), and began an earnest supplication to his Lord for support. **“O Allah, fulfil for me what You have promised me. O Allah, I ask you for the fulfillment of Your Covenant and Promise. O Allah, if this group of Muslims is destroyed (today), You will no longer be worshipped on the earth.”**

The Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) continued to beseech his Lord, stretching forth his hands and facing the *Qiblah*, until his cloak fell from his shoulders. Abu

Bakr came up behind him, picked it up and placed it back on his shoulders, and said in concern, “O Prophet of Allah, you have beseeched your Lord sufficiently. Allah will surely fulfill His Promise to You.”

Signs Heralding Victory

The Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) fell into a mild slumber during which he (PBBUH) had a vision promising victory from Allah. He (PBBUH) raised his head after it and said, **“Rejoice, O Abu Bakr! Allah’s Help has come to you. Here is Jibril (Gabriel PBUH) holding the reins of his horse and leading it, and there is dust upon his front teeth.”**

The Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) then went out of the trellis, cladding himself in his armor, and recited: **“Soon will their multitude be put to flight, and they will show their backs.”** (Al-Qamar 54:45) He (PBBUH) then took a handful of dust while facing the Quraysh, and tossed it in their faces, saying, **“May their faces be disfigured.”** The dust particles flew into the eyes and noses of every single polytheist, leaving none of them out. [In relation to the effect of this handful of dust and the aspect of divine help, the Noble Qur’an confirms it, saying: **“You (O Muhammad) threw not when you did throw, but Allah threw.”** (Al-Anfal 8:17)]

Confusion Among the Disbelievers’ Front Lines and the Start of the Muslims’ Counter-Attack

The first part of the Prophet’s (PBBUH) plan had been successfully accomplished, throwing the Qurayshi army into confusion. The Prophet (PBBUH) now altered his strategy from that of maintaining positions and utilizing archers to shoot at close range to that of launching a counteroffensive and fighting hard. **“Attack strongly,”** he (PBBUH) ordered. He (PBBUH) went forth among his men on the battlefield, stirring and motivating them to struggle by saying, **“By the One Who has Muhammad’s soul in His Hand, any man who fights them today and is killed, having being patient, having desired**

Allah's Reward, having advanced forward and not turned his back (from the battlefield), Allah will admit him into Paradise."

"That Would be a Long Life!"

Clad in his armor, the Prophet (PBBUH) raced ahead until no Muslim was closer than he (PBBUH) was to the enemy's lines, all the while leading and inspiring confidence and devotion in the troops, enkindling the Muslims' courage and heroism to the utmost.

Among his encouraging words was, **"Go forth towards a Paradise as wide as the heavens and earth."**

`Umair ibn Al-Humam, hearing this, said, "O Messenger of Allah! A Paradise as wide as the heavens and earth?"

He (PBBUH) replied, **"Yes."**

`Umair said, "Excellent! Excellent!"

The Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) asked him, **"What makes you say, 'Excellent! Excellent!'"**

`Umair replied, "Nothing, O Messenger of Allah, except the hope that I will be one of its inhabitants."

He (PBBUH) said, **"You are one of its inhabitants."**

`Umair had some dates in his hand that he was eating. He said, "If I live until I finish these dates, that will be a long life." He threw down the dates, took his sword, and fought the enemy until he was martyred.

The Angels Descending to Propel the Believers Towards Victory

After the Prophet (PBBUH) had spent plenty of time and effort carefully planning, organizing, and preparing for the event, down to every detail, using all

necessary and possible means for humans to achieve success, and continually asking Allah's Help with humility and persistence, Allah (Glorified be He) sent down His Angels to aid the Muslims overcome their enemy. In this regard, Allah says in the Qur'an: "(Remember) when your Lord inspired the angels, (saying), 'I am with you, so keep firm those who have believed. I will cast terror into the hearts of those who have disbelieved, so strike (them) over the necks and strike of them every fingertip.'"¹ (Al-Anfal 8:12)

Allah (Exalted be He) also says: "You (believers) killed them not, but Allah killed them. And you (O Prophet) threw not when you did throw but Allah threw, that He might test the believers by a fair trial from Him. Verily, Allah is All-Hearer, All-Knower." (Al-Anfal 8:17)

The Muslims mounted their attack into a sweeping offensive, and many fighters became aware of the angels' presence. Among the accounts of the angels' participation on that day was the one relating that while a Muslim man was racing after a warrior from among the *Mushrikin*, he heard above him the crack of a whip. He then looked at the *Mushrikin* man, who had suddenly (without apparent cause) fallen dead on his back. Another Muslim man was chasing a *Mushrikin* warrior during the battle to strike him when suddenly his head fell off before he attacked him with his sword.

It was also narrated that on the Day of Badr the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) said to `Ali and Abu Bakr, "**Jibril (Gabriel) is with one of you and Mika'il (Michael) is with the other. And Israfil is a great angel who is witnessing the battle and is present in the row.**"

An overwhelming victory from Almighty Allah was thus handed to the Muslims, by Allah's Grace, for their strong reliance on Him and their sincere endeavors.

¹ It was reported on the authority of Al-Rabi' ibn Anas that following the Battle of Badr, the people recognized those whom the angels killed from those whom they killed by the wounds on their necks, fingertips, and toes; those parts had a mark as if they were branded by fire.

Satan Withdraws from the Battlefield

Satan was on the battlefield. He had joined the ranks of the *Mushrikin* in the form of Suraqah ibn Malik ibn Ju`shum, the chief of Banu Mudlij. He accompanied the pagan army, all the time spurring them on and promising them certain victory. “No one of humankind can conquer you today!” he said to them, “Indeed, I am your protector.” But once Satan saw the angels’ intervention on the side of the Muslims, and the scale of defeat they were both (the angels combined with the Muslims) inflicting upon the pagans, he turned upon his heels and fled.

Satan was caught by Al-Harith ibn Hisham, who thought him to be Suraqah, but he punched him in his chest with a force that knocked Al-Harith to the ground and ran away. Some of the *Mushrikin* cried out, “Where are you going, O Suraqah? Have you not said that you will be our protector, and you will not leave us?” Satan replied, as the Qur’an narrates in Al-Anfal (8:48), “**Verily, I have nothing to do with you. Verily! I see what you do not see. Verily! I fear Allah, for Allah is Severe in punishment.**”

Decisive Victory

The battle drew to a close with manifest signs of confusion and defeat showing in the disbelievers’ organization, whose army lines began to break down under the determined attacks of the Muslim troops, resulting in total disruption of the pagan army.

Thousands of pagan warriors were retreating and fleeing the battlefield, scattering in different directions. The Muslims followed in pursuit, killing some of them and capturing others as prisoners of war. As dusk approached, the Battle of Badr ended in a clear victory for the Muslims.

Scenes from the Battlefield

1. **Two have already been mentioned:** the two superb instances of rare love for the Prophet (PBBUH), and martyrdom for Allah's Cause, namely Sawad ibn Ghaziyah and `Umair ibn Al-Humam.
2. **Bilal Kills Umayyah ibn Khalaf**

`Abdul-Rahman ibn `Awf took Umayyah ibn Khalaf as a captive and was leading him away when Bilal spotted him. At early Islam, Umayyah was the one who brutally tortured Bilal in Makkah when he was his slave, to force him to abandon Islam.

Umayyah used to make Bilal lie down on his back on the sunbaked sand of the desert with a huge rock pressing down on his chest and tell him he would keep him there till he died or renounced his religion of One God. Throughout the ordeal, Bilal responded by patiently muttering, "Only one God! Only one God!"

These painful memories surged through Bilal's mind at seeing Umayyah at Badr, and he cried out, "The head of disbelief, Umayyah ibn Khalaf! May I not be saved if he is saved (from death today)!"

`Abdul-Rahman ibn `Awf and Umayyah ibn Khalaf had been close friends during the pre-Islamic time. When the Battle of Badr ended, he met Umayyah ibn Khalaf, who proposed to take him and his son as captives and receive from him a ransom for their freedom. `Abdul-Rahman agreed, cast off some armor which he had taken as booty, and walked with Umayyah ibn Khalaf.

Bilal saw Umayyah being led away by `Abdul-Rahman ibn `Awf and, when prevented by `Abdul-Rahman ibn `Awf from harming his captive (Umayyah), Bilal shouted at the top of his voice to a gathered group of Al-Ansar, "O supporters of Allah, the head of disbelief, Umayyah ibn Khalaf! May I not be saved if he is saved." The Muslims then encircled Umayyah and put him and his son to death.

`Abdul-Rahman ibn `Awf said, “May Allah be merciful to Bilal! He caused me to lose both my armor and my captives.”

3. The Death of Abu Jahl

Abu Jahl was the flag-bearer and Commander in Chief of the Makkan army. He could see that the scales were tipping against him and a state of chaos and confusion was spreading among his soldiers' lines, yet he was defiant and adamant not to give up. He tried to regroup his forces and halt the torrential advance of the Muslims. He persisted in stirring up and emboldening his soldiers, using pompous and vehement speech, until the reality of the situation forced itself upon him and his troops. All their lines were crumbling, and they started to withdraw under the pressure of the Muslim attacks. Soon their pullback turned into a full-scale retreat.

None remained with Abu Jahl except a devoted group of pagan men who drew themselves around him, enclosing him securely in a defensive circle of swords and spears, but these dense walls of defense started to drop away about him.

Two youths from Al-Ansar with no experience on the battlefield, Mu`adh ibn `Amr ibn Al-Jamuh and Mu`awidh ibn `Afra, each asked `Abdul-Rahman ibn `Awf secretly so that his companion would not hear, “O uncle, show me Abu Jahl.” `Abdul-Rahman ibn `Awf asked, “O my nephew, what will you do to him?” He said, “I have been told that he reviles the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH). By the One in Whose hand is my soul, if I see him, I will not leave him until the one of us who is destined to die first is dead.” The other youth then spoke similar words to `Abdul-Rahman.

Immediately afterwards, `Abdul-Rahman ibn `Awf saw Abu Jahl on the battlefield, walking among his men who kept him well guarded with a thicket of swords and spears and were saying, “Abul-Hakam cannot be reached (there is no way to kill him).” `Abdul-Rahman pointed him out to the two young boys and said, “Lo! There is your man that you asked me about.” Both youths waited until

they got the opportunity, then dashed towards him and attacked him with their swords, inflicting deadly blows on him. Mu`adh ibn `Amr ibn Al-Jamuh first struck him a hard blow that cut off his leg. Abu Jahl's son, `Ikrimah, retaliated with a blow that severed Mu`adh's arm from the shoulder. Then Mu`awidh ibn `Afra' came upon Abu Jahl and finished him off with another blow, then fought on until he was killed in the battle.

The Muslims Reciprocate Past Kindness

The Prophet (PBBUH) had learned that some men from the Quraysh were coerced into participating and had no intention of fighting the Muslims. Before the fighting began, he (PBBUH) gave directions to his Companions regarding them, saying, **“I have come to know that some men from Banu Hashim and others have been forced to come out. They do not want to fight us. Therefore, whoever encounters anyone from Banu Hashim (in the battlefield) should not kill him. Whoever encounters Abul-Bakhtari ibn Hisham should not kill him. Whoever encounters Al-`Abbas ibn `Abdul-Muttalib (the Prophet's PBBUH paternal uncle) should not kill him, for he has been forced to come (with the pagan army).”**

This was a direct order from the Prophet (PBBUH) to kindly treat the people who had shown goodwill to the Muslims and to recognize their past acts of solidarity and compassion towards them (while they were living among them in Makkah). They should refrain from fighting them and not consider them the same as willful combatants set on killing the Muslims and looking to annihilate them. This was despite their taking part in the battle and fighting along the pagan army; and, indeed, killing the Muslim fighters on the battlefield if they had a chance.

The motivation behind this was not to favor kindred. The Prophet's (PBBUH) goals were far loftier than any such temporal considerations. It was prompted by the support and protection given by Banu Hashim to the Muslims during the thirteen years of the Prophet's (PBBUH) mission in Makkah, three

years of which every single member of Banu Hisham came under the Quraysh's boycott and voluntarily joined the Muslims in the mountain pass of Abu Talib during the siege. Also, among them were men who lobbied on the Muslims' behalf and pressured the Quraysh into annulling the boycott and tearing up its harsh document.

The Prophet (PBBUH) valued the righteousness of Banu Hashim towards them and treated it as a virtuous deed that deserved to be repaid not just with its like, but tenfold.

Thus, at this critical juncture, just when the battle was about to begin, the Prophet (PBBUH) interceded on their behalf with the Muslims, ordering them to refrain from killing them.

However, not all of them accepted the Prophet's (PBBUH) offer of protection. Abul-Bakhtari, despite being one of the key men that spearheaded the annulment of the boycott against the Muslims, refused and insisted on fighting against the Muslims and was eventually killed in the battle.

No True Ties Except Those of Faith

When inevitably confronted with blood relatives during the battle, the affinity by faith showed itself as truer and more binding among the believers than blood affinity. Under all circumstances, belief must ultimately prevail over disbelief in Almighty Allah. Confrontations between relatives occurred, such as the following two:

- `Umar ibn Al-Khattab (RA) set aside kinship and killed his own maternal uncle, Al-`As ibn Hisham ibn Al-Mughirah, in the battle.
- Mus`ab ibn `Umair passed by his brother Abu `Aziz ibn `Umair, who fought against the Muslims and was taken captive by a man from the Ansar. Mus`ab said to the Ansari who captured him, "Hold on tight to him, for his mother is a wealthy woman, and perhaps she will ransom him from you." Abu `Aziz reproached his brother Mus`ab, saying, "O

my brother! Is this your recommendation regarding me?” Mus`ab replied, “He (the Ansari) is my brother, not you.”

The Final Outcome of the Battle

Badr was a decisive victory for the Muslims, with only fourteen martyred. Losses among the ranks of the disbelievers were much heavier: seventy men were killed, including prominent leaders (such as Abu Jahl), and seventy others were captured. The rest escaped and fled to Makkah.

Overall, this means that five disbelievers were killed for each martyr from the Muslims (at a ratio of 14 to 70). This percentage exceeded by far the estimation made by `Umair ibn Wahb when he was dispatched by the Quraysh to find out the numbers of the Muslim army, and he reported, “I do not think any man among them will be killed before he has first killed one of you.” (He estimated it to be a ratio of 1 to 1).

But, since aid and victory are gifts from Allah, not a product of human strength, five of their tribal notables and headmen were killed for each man killed from the Muslims. It was a manifest victory granted by Allah (Exalted be He). The most tyrannical personalities of the Quraysh were destroyed in Badr.

News of the Defeat Reaches Makkah

The bad news began to reach Makkah. The *Mushrikin* abandoned the battlefield in a disorderly, panic-stricken manner and were dispersed and scattered in small parties along the valleys and ravines. Terrified, they headed back towards Makkah, not knowing how they would enter it because of the disgrace of their defeat.

The Quraysh’s flight and the death of their noblemen and chiefs descended like a blow on the stunned Makkans. `Utbah ibn Rabi`ah, Shaybah ibn Rabi`ah, Abul-Hakam ibn Hisham (Abu Jahl), Umayyah ibn Khalaf, and others were all killed in one day.

At first, the news was met with incredulity and, later, with alarm. It had a devastating psychological impact on the Quraysh. Abu Lahab, who had stayed behind from Badr and instead hired a man to replace him, was devastated by the news.

On hearing the result of the battle from Abu Rafi` (a slave of Al-`Abbas ibn `Abdul-Muttalib, who was later emancipated by the Prophet PBBUH), Abu Lahab gave him a severe blow to the face, and then lifted him up and knocked him to the ground. He knelt upon him and kept beating him until Umm Al-Fadl (Al-`Abbas's wife) rescued him from his hands.

Seven days later, Abu Lahab was afflicted by a contagious ulcerous disease called Al-`Adasah, commonly regarded as ominous by the Arabs, which ended his life. Nobody, not even his own sons, dared approach his body for burial due to the nature of the disease. His body remained for three days before anyone arranged his funeral or attempted to bury him.

After three days, fearing the shame that might be brought upon the family by leaving their father's body unburied, stinking, and rotting in his house, they dug a hole and pushed his body into it from a distance using long wooden poles and then cast stones over him from afar until Abu Lahab's dead body was covered.

What was ironic was the Quraysh's reaction to mourning their losses. They prohibited lamenting over any dead or captured men in Badr in order not to give the Muslims in Makkah a chance to see them grieving! Al-Aswad ibn Al-Muttalib had lost three of his sons at Badr and desperately wanted to mourn them. One night he heard a woman wailing and assumed that mourning had been permitted. He immediately sent his slave to find out if it was so. He said to him, "See whether lamentation has been allowed and whether the Quraysh are weeping for their dead. Perhaps I can weep for my sons, for the inside of my body is on fire."

When the slave came back, he said, "It is only a woman weeping for a camel of hers she has lost." With keen agony, Al-Aswad replied in the following lines:

Does she weep because her camel is lost?

And restlessness has disrupted her sleep?

Weep not for your young camel but for Badr, where our good fortunes deserted us!

Back to Badr

As a tradition of victory, initiated and maintained by the Prophet (PBBUH) in all his following victories, he (PBBUH) stayed with his Companions at Badr for three days after the conclusion of the battle, during which he (PBBUH) inspected the battlefield to determine who was killed and captured from among the *Mushrikin* and to bury the martyrs.

The Second Day after the Battle

After the killed *Mushrikin* were identified, the Prophet (PBBUH) ordered that their dead bodies be taken and thrown into one of the dry abandoned wells of Badr. This was done, and dust was heaped over them.

As night drew on, the Prophet (PBBUH) began to contemplate the divine victory granted to the Muslims, with their limited numbers, versus Allah's abandonment of the *Mushrikin* as a result of their transgressions and stubborn disbelief.

The Third Day after the Battle – Addressing Those Buried in the Well

On the morning of the third day following the battle, the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) ordered that his mount be saddled. He (PBBUH) rode, followed by his Companions, and halted at the edge of the well where the Qurayshi head chiefs of disbelief had been buried. He (PBBUH) addressed them, saying, “**O inhabitants of the well! O `Utbah ibn Rabi`ah! O Shaybah ibn Rabi`ah! O Umayyah ibn Khalaf! O Abu Jahl ibn Hisham!** (Calling them by name, one

after the other.) Have you found to be true what your Lord promised you? I have found to be true what my Lord promised me.”

The Muslims asked, “O Messenger of Allah, are you speaking to lifeless bodies?” He (PBBUH) replied, “By the One in Whose Hand is Muhammad’s soul, you do not hear what I say any better than they do, but they cannot respond.”

The Glad Tidings of the Victory Reaches Madinah

Wishing to quickly share the good news with the Muslims in Madinah before his return, the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) sent two heralds to announce the victory: `Abdullah ibn Rawahah to the inhabitants of the upper part of Madinah, and Zaid ibn Harithah to the inhabitants of the lower part. Zaid rode the Prophet’s (PBBUH) own she-camel named Al-Qaswa’

When the two men bearing the good news reached Madinah, the Muslims flocked around them, anxious to know the battle’s outcome. Once they heard the good news, they raised their voices with joyous *Takbir* (saying: Allah is Greater) and *Tablil* (saying: there is no god but Allah), shaking the city with their jubilant shouts. It was a glorifying moment in which an atmosphere of joy enveloped the whole city.

The Jews and the hypocrites were left distressed and mortified by the news. They tried to convince themselves, and the Muslims who had stayed in Madinah, that the great victory achieved was false. They spread rumors that the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) had been killed and tried to give credibility to their lie by saying, “Muhammad was killed. There is his she-camel which we all know (i.e., Zaid came back riding it. Had he achieved victory, his she-camel would have stayed with him). Zaid does not know what he is saying due to the terror (he has been through in the course of the battle), and he came back fleeing.”

The Muslims, however, quickly got confirmation that the victory was real and not a rumor, and their happiness intensified. Their chiefs eagerly went out of the city to wait and receive the Prophet (PBBUH) on the road leading to Badr.

The Death of Ruqaiyah, the Prophet's (PBBUH) Daughter

Only one thing diminished the joy of the Muslims: the death of Ruqaiyah, the Prophet's (PBBUH) daughter. The Muslims in Madinah received the news of victory just after they had levelled the earth over her dead body. She was seriously ill when the Prophet (PBBUH) left for Badr, and at his (the Prophet's) request, her husband `Uthman stayed behind to nurse her.

The Spoils of War and the Captives

A Difference Regarding the Spoils of War

As the battle was ending and the victory was becoming more assured, the Companions divided their forces into three divisions. One division chased after the fleeing enemy, killing some of them and capturing others. The second division started collecting the spoils of war from the battlefield. The third division surrounded the trellis of the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) to counter any attempts made by his enemies to mount a surprise attack on him.

By nightfall, when the Muslims gathered together, a dispute started as to which of them were entitled to the spoils of war. Those who had collected them said, "We collected them, so no one (besides us) should have a share in them." This was according to the custom followed in pre-Islamic wars concerning the spoils, which gave the right to them to the warriors who collected them.

However, those who had gone out in pursuit of the enemy said, "You are not more entitled to have them than we are. We drove the enemy away from them and then defeated them." Next those who stood guard over the Prophet (PBBUH) said, "You are not more entitled to have them than we are. We surrounded the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) fearing that the enemy would attack him unexpectedly. And so we were busy (protecting) him."

The Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) was informed of the argument; to settle it, he (PBBUH) commanded that all the spoils be carried away with them, under the charge of `Abdullah ibn Ka`b, until he (PBBUH) had reached a judgment regarding them or Allah (Exalted be He) had revealed the way they should be disposed of.

The Victorious Army Marches back to Madinah

Having stayed at Badr for three days, the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) headed back to Madinah with his victorious army, bringing along with them the captives and the spoils of war.

Equal Distribution of the Spoils of War

After crossing the straits of Al-Safra,¹ the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) halted with his army at a sandhill between the straits and the valley of Al-Naziyah. There, he (PBBUH) began to divide the spoils of war equally between the Muslims, after he had taken one-fifth of it in accordance with Allah's Commandment sent down to him: "And know that whatever of war-booty that you may gain, verily one-fifth of it is assigned to Allah and to the Messenger, and to his near relatives, and (also) the orphans, the needy and the wayfarers, if you have believed in Allah and in that which We (Allah) sent down to Our servant (Muhammad) on the Day of criterion (between right and wrong), the Day when the two forces met (the Battle of Badr). And Allah is Capable of everything." (Al-Anfal 8:41)

The previous noble Qur'anic verse laid down the principles for distributing the spoils of war and solved the issue of who should be eligible to receive shares in it. The method established was as follows:

- One fifth of it is to be divided into five equal shares – 1) a one-fifth share for Allah and His Messenger (PBBUH) [Allah's Share is inclusive of the Messenger's (PBBUH) share and should be spent in the common interests of the Muslims], 2) a one-fifth share for his near kindred [Banu Hashim and Banu `Abdul-Muttalib], 3) a one-fifth share for the orphans, 4) a one-fifth share for the needy, and 5) a one-fifth-share for the wayfarers¹. Accordingly, the share of the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH)

¹ *Ibn Al-Sabil*, translated as the wayfarer, is a term used for needy travelers who lack the means to continue their journey.

was a fifth of a fifth ($1/25^{\text{th}} = 4\%$) for his own expenses and those of his dependents.

It was narrated that the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) said, “**Nothing of your spoils of war is lawful for me except the one-fifth. Even this one-fifth will be given back (redistributed) to you.**” (Sunan Abu Dawud)

- The remaining four-fifths were to be distributed equally between the fighters – a single share to each infantryman (foot soldier) and a double share to each cavalryman (one for the horseman and the other for the horse on which he fought) with no distinction between soldiers and commanders. It should be noted that fighters during that time bought their weapons, equipment, and horses with their own resources. They were also required to leave an adequate sum for the upkeep of their families during their absence. There was no supply and logistics support to the army as exists nowadays. Thus, compensating these warriors through a share of the spoils gained in battle was only fair.
- The shares of the fighters martyred in the battle were given to their heirs.
- Those who had been unavoidably absent from the fighting due to an excuse acceptable to the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) or had been engaged in another specific duty assigned to them by the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) were allocated a share equal to the share of the fighters who directly participated.

The Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) took into consideration the particular circumstances of each of his Companions and the reasons that prevented them from participating. In this manner, all those who had a role in achieving the victory, no matter whether this role was direct involvement on the battlefield or away from it, were given a share of the spoils. This method was applied in the distribution of the spoils gained in all subsequent battles.

Executing Two Captives as War Criminals

Al-Nadr ibn Al-Harith and `Uqbah ibn Abu Mu`ait were two of the worst criminals of the Quraysh and archenemies of Islam, especially in their hateful persecution of the Prophet (PBBUH). They were men of widespread evil. Previous instances of their wickedness towards the Prophet (PBBUH) include:

- While the Prophet (PBBUH) was prostrating in prayer behind the *Maqam* (Ibrahim's Station near the Ka`bah), `Uqbah ibn Abu Mu`ait came up and put his foot on his neck. He pressed his foot down hard on his neck and left it there, until the Prophet (PBBUH) said he thought his eyes were going to bulge out of his head. On another occasion, `Uqbah, incited by his friend Ubay ibn Khalaf, approached the Prophet (PBBUH) and spat in his face.
- A second time, `Uqbah threw the blood and entrails of a slaughtered sheep on the Prophet's (PBBUH) head and back while he was prostrating in prayer. The Prophet (PBBUH) remained in prostration and did not raise his head until his daughter, Fatimah, came and brushed this filth off him.
- A third time, one of them twisted his garment around the Prophet's (PBBUH) neck and began to strangle him with it. He came very near to killing him, if it were not for the timely intervention of Abu Bakr.
- Al-Nadr ibn Al-Harith maintained a rancorous, unwavering hostility towards Islam and did everything to undermine it and discredit the Prophet (PBBUH). His relentless stance was that the message of the Qur'an must be derided, ridiculed, and alienated. On every occasion the Prophet (PBBUH) preached to the people, he distracted them from listening by reciting fables, myths, or music. He blasphemously claimed that what he narrated was better than what Allah (Glorified be He) had revealed to the Prophet (PBBUH). He was also involved in the persecution of Muslims. For this reason, he was not treated like the other captives.

Both these men were among the most tyrannical and harmful to Islam and its followers. In modern terminology, they were war criminals who committed excessive offenses and did not deserve to be treated as captives of war and live. Rather, they were punished for their crimes, as pardon cannot be given to people convicted of major crimes.

On reaching the straits of Al-Safra, the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) ordered that Al-Nadr ibn Al-Harith be executed. Then, on reaching Irbil, he (PBBUH) ordered that `Uqbah ibn Abu Mu`ait be executed. `Ali ibn Abu Talib carried out the executions.

Kind Treatment of the Captives

The Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) entered Madinah victorious. Many Muslims, having heard the news of his divinely aided triumph, hastened out of the city and gathered along the route to Madinah to receive him with congratulations, and accompanied him and the victorious Muslim army on their way back to Madinah.

A day after the Prophet's (PBBUH) arrival in Madinah, the captives arrived. The Prophet (PBBUH) distributed them among his Companions and urged good treatment of them, saying, **“I enjoin you to treat the captives kindly.”** This commandment was issued by Messenger Muhammad (PBBUH) 1400 years before the introduction of the Geneva Convention Rules of War and the declaration of the human rights of war prisoners.

Humanitarian treatment of captives thus became an established rule in Islam: they must be given kind treatment, and they have a right to it. In response to the commandment of the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH), the captives of Badr received the most gracious treatment. Below are testimonies given by some of the captives:

- Abu `Aziz ibn `Umair, the brother of Mus`ab ibn `Umair, narrated, “I was one of the captives on the Day of Badr, and the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) said (concerning us), **‘I enjoin you to treat the captives kindly.’** I was among a group of Al-Ansar. Whenever they brought out their lunch or supper, they gave me the (wheat) bread to eat (which formed the best part of their meal) and they themselves ate the dates because of the exhortation of the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) [regarding captives].”
- Abul-`As ibn Al-Rabi`, another captive of Badr, narrated, “I was among a company of men from Al-Ansar, and may Allah reward them well. When we had dinner or supper, they would favor me over themselves by giving me the bread while they ate the dates, even though bread was scarce and dates were their staple food. Whenever a crumb of bread fell into the hand of any one of them, he would give it to me.”
- Al-Awalid ibn Al-Mughirah narrated a similar experience and added, “And they would have us ride (on their mounts), while they walked.”

These are a small sample of the testimonies of the captives showing the humane treatment they received from their Muslim captors. Remarkably, the Muslims acted as exhorted by the Sunnah¹ and gave the captives preference over themselves, maintaining an altruistic and hospitable attitude towards them, even though they were in straitened circumstances.

Abu Bakr and `Umar Give Their Opinion Regarding the Captives

After arriving in Madinah and getting settled, the Prophet (PBBUH) consulted his Companions about how to deal with the seventy warriors taken captive at Badr. Abu Bakr said, “O Messenger of Allah, these are your kinsmen

¹ Prophetic teachings; acts, sayings, or approvals of the Prophet (PBBUH).

and tribesmen! Allah has granted you power and victory over them. I say you should spare them and accept ransom from them. What we take from them (i.e., the ransom money) will give us strength against the disbelievers. And hopefully, Allah may (in due course) guide them to Islam, and they will become supporters of you.” The Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) listened without commenting.

The Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) then asked `Umar ibn Al-Khattab for his opinion, and he replied, “By Allah, I do not share Abu Bakr’s view. They have denied you, fought you, and expelled you. I say you should hand over to me so-and-so (naming a relative of his) to strike off his head, and hand over to Hamzah his brother Al-`Abbas, and to `Ali his brother `Aqil, and so on. People will thus know that we have no love in our hearts towards the *Mushrikin*. For indeed, these men (captives) are their mighty notables, chieftains, and leaders.”

The Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) listened without commenting. He (PBBUH) then said, **“Verily, Allah softens the hearts of some men for His Sake until they become softer than milk. And He hardens the hearts of some men for His Sake until they become harder than stone. Your example, O Abu Bakr, is like that of Ibrahim (Abraham PBBUH) when he said, ‘O my Lord! They have indeed led astray many among humankind. But whoever follows me, he verily is of me. And whoever disobeys me, still You are indeed Most Forgiving, Most Merciful.’ (Ibrahim 14:36) And your example, O `Umar, is like that of Nuh (Noah PBBUH) when he said, ‘My Lord! Leave not one of the disbelievers on the earth!’”** (Nuh 71:26)

Both Companions received praise from the Prophet (PBBUH) for their opinions, which although different, aimed for the same goal: strengthening Islam and defeating its enemies. Of the two, the Prophet (PBBUH) preferred Abu Bakr’s view and decided to set the captives free in return for a ransom. He (PBBUH) accordingly directed his Companions, **“You are now dependent (poor and lacking resources), so do not release any of your captives except with (payment of) a ransom.”** He (PBBUH) specified the amount of ransom to be

between one thousand and four thousand dinars per captive, depending on the captive's financial situation and rank in his tribe.

Freedom in Return for Teaching the Unlettered

The ransom for the captives at Badr took on an educational dimension. While most of the Makkan people were lettered, the Madinan people were unlettered. So, the Prophet (PBBUH) made it possible for the literate among the captives, who could not afford the ransom, to purchase their freedom by teaching ten Madinan children how to properly read and write. Once the ten children were taught well enough, the captive-instructor was set free.

Allowing literate prisoners to free themselves by teaching reading and writing to ten children, instead of requesting just a monetary ransom, showed the Prophet's (PBBUH) far-sightedness and high regard for knowledge, education, and elimination of illiteracy. This occurred at a time when Muslims scarcely had money, for money was never an objective.

Indeed, this view of matters is not unusual or unexpected for a religion whose first revealed command in its divine Book starts with the word *'Read'*: "Read in the Name of your Lord Who created (all that exists); created the human from a clinging substance (a clot). Read, and your Lord is the Most Generous, Who taught by the pen. Taught the human that which he knew not." (Al-`Alaq 96:1-5)

Free Pardon without Ransom

The Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) released several captives without ransom. Among them were Al-Muttalib ibn-Hantab, Saifi ibn Abu Rifa`ah, and Abu `Azzah Al-Jumahi, who was needy with several children to support and no means to pay his ransom.

Abu `Azzah pleaded to the Prophet (PBBUH), "O Messenger of Allah, you know that I have no wealth and that I am in need, and I have children to support. So confer a favor upon me (i.e., free me)." The Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) set

him free in exchange for his vow not to aid anyone against him¹. But, as shall be seen later in the Battle of Uhud, the man broke his vow.

The Prophet's Son-in-Law among the Captives

Among the captives was Abul-`As ibn Al-Rabi`, the husband of the Prophet's (PBBUH) eldest daughter Zainab. When the Quraysh began to send ransom money for the release of their relatives, Zainab sent some money to ransom her husband, and it included a necklace that her mother, Khadijah, had gifted to her when she got married.

The Prophet (PBBUH) recognized the necklace and, greatly moved with compassion for Zainab and the recollection of his former wife Khadijah, said, **“If you consider it proper to release her captive for her and to return what belongs to her, then do so.”**

The Companions immediately agreed and released Abul-`As, and both the money and the necklace were returned to Zainab. The Prophet (PBBUH) allowed this on a condition, secured by a pledge from Abul-`As, that he would divorce Zainab.

Under Islam, a Muslim woman cannot stay married to a disbelieving man. Abul-`As divorced Zainab and she emigrated to join her father in Madinah. The Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) sent Zaid ibn Harithah along with another man from Al-Ansar to escort Zainab from the valley of Ya`jaj (about eight miles away from Makkah) into Madinah.

Allah's Reprimand for Accepting Ransoming

Releasing the captives of Badr on payment of ransom, instead of executing them, incurred a reprimand from Allah (Glorified be He).

¹ Abu `Azzah was an influential poet and used his poetry to mobilize and provoke the masses to fight the Muslims.

Pertaining to this, Allah (Exalted is He) revealed His Saying: “It is not for a Prophet to have captives of war (and free them with ransom) until he has thoroughly subdued (Allah’s enemies) in the land. You (people) desire the transient commodities of this world, but Allah desires (for you) the Hereafter. Allah is Mighty and Wise. Were it not for a prior decree from Allah, a severe torment would have touched you for what you took.” (Al-Anfal 8:67-68)

“A prior decree from Allah...” referred to in the previous Qur’anic verse was explained by scholars to be Allah’s Saying in another passage: “When you meet those who disbelieve (in battle), smite (their) necks until you have fully subdued (defeated) them, then bind any captives firmly. Afterwards, either release them by an act of grace or by ransom, until the war lays down its burden.” (Muhammad 47:4)

The previous Divine ordainment gives permission to accept ransom. That is why the Muslims were not punished but only reprimanded for sparing many of the enemy’s soldiers (considering the crimes they had perpetrated), and taking them captive and accepting ransom before they had subdued their hostile force and achieved the tactical and strategic goal of gaining power to protect themselves and their city.

Another interpretation is that the previously mentioned Qur’anic verse was revealed following the Battle of Badr. Accordingly, “a prior decree from Allah...” refers to Allah’s foreordained decision of legitimizing spoils of war and ransom paid for captives for Muhammad’s (PBBUH) followers. It may also refer to Allah’s unchangeable, foreordained Will of bestowing His Mercy and Forgiveness on all those who participated in Badr.

The Outcomes of the Battle of Badr

The Day of Badr was over. It was a day that marked the dividing line between truth and falsehood, and polytheistic and monotheistic faiths as described by the

Almighty in His Words: “...on the Day of Criterion¹ – the Day when the two armies met (the Battle of Badr). And Allah is Able to do all things.” (Al-Anfal 8:41)

The event of Badr became a milestone between two eras of Islamic history: an era of patience, hopeful waiting, and expectation (identified as the Makkan phase), and an era of strength, action, and initiation (identified as the Madinan phase). It constituted a historic turning point with profound and far-reaching impact on the different communities it touched, which can be summarized as follows:

Effects on the Muslims:

1. The Muslims became stronger, especially in the eyes of their opponents inside and around Madinah. They had to think twice before attempting to invade Madinah or attack the Muslims. (Nevertheless, this did not deter some tribes from attempting and failing to invade it.)
2. The Muslims’ reliance on and trust in Allah grew stronger, and many *Mushrikin* among the Quraysh embraced Islam, which boosted the morale of the oppressed Muslims of Makkah.
3. They gained military experience and developed new fighting techniques. They became a force to be reckoned with throughout the Arabian Peninsula.
4. The spoils of war conferred upon them by Allah (Glorified be He) at Badr improved their financial and economic condition after suffering economically due to the dire straits and poverty they were brought into in the course of their persecution and emigration, leaving all their assets behind them.

Effects on the Quraysh:

1. The Quraysh suffered heavy military losses on the battlefield, especially

¹ That which distinguishes between and separates truth and falsehood.

the death of their major chieftains, such as Abu Jahl ibn Hisham, `Utbah and Shaybah, the two sons of Rabi`ah, Umayyah ibn Khalaf, and others, who were not only leaders but were also the bravest, strongest, and most valiant fighters among the Quraysh.

2. They suffered an overwhelming strategic and psychological defeat. Madinah became not only a threat to the Quraysh's trade, but also to their sovereignty and influence across the entire Arabian Peninsula.
3. The ignominious retreat they made, and their men who were killed and captured during the battle, left the Makkans nursing bitter grudges and grief. Abu Lahab – as mentioned before – was afflicted with a contagious disease and died a week later. Abu Sufyan lost one of his sons and another was made captive. Almost every house in Makkah had people grieving their own losses. This induced within them a collective determination to do one thing: revenge. Some even vowed not to bathe until they had avenged themselves on those who had disgraced them and killed their chiefs and dignitaries.

Effects on the Jews of Madinah:

1. The Jews were horrified by the victory achieved by the Muslims and their subsequent rise in power and importance. The Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) gaining honor and status in Madinah put them at real risk of losing their position of pre-eminence and influence in the region.
2. They resolved to breach the covenant they had made with the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) on his arrival in Madinah.
3. They went from keeping their hatred hidden to expressing it in words, actions, and conspiracies against Islam and its Prophet (PBBUH).

Effects on the *Mushrikin* of Madinah:

1. Skeptics of the new message, and the pagan populace of Madinah, could no longer dare to show disbelief and display open enmity towards Islam.

2. Hypocrisy, deceit, and duplicity started manifesting. People who still harbored disbelief began to outwardly declare faith in Islam in the presence of the Prophet (PBBUH) and his Companions, but inwardly retained just as much disbelief and enmity towards Islam as they had prior to Badr, as will be discussed in detail later.

Events between Badr and Uhud

New sets of challenges on many fronts started facing the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH): neighboring *Mushrikin* tribes, the Quraysh, and the Jewish and pagan populace of Madinah. Each of these parties were plotting and laying pitfalls, each in their own way. The following paragraphs expose some of these challenges:

First, Challenges from Neighboring Tribes

The victory Allah (Praised be He) granted the Muslims at Badr struck apprehension into some Bedouin tribes surrounding Madinah. For them, the question of belief and disbelief was not the issue of concern. Instead, it was material interests.

They felt economically threatened because they depended on plundering and looting as a means of living and feared that the rise of a powerful Muslim state would prevent these illegal avenues of making a living. Since Badr, the Muslims stayed on the lookout and swiftly counteracted any plans or attempts these tribes made for invading Madinah, including the following two attempts:

1. The *Ghazwah* (Expedition) of Banu Salim

On Shawwal in the year 2 A.H., just one week after the return from Badr, the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) received intelligence through the scouts patrolling Madinah that Banu Sulaim and Ghatafan were assembling their troops to attack Madinah.

The Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) pre-empted their planned attack and, with a force of two hundred cavalymen, made a surprise expedition to the clan's dwelling territory. He (PBBUH) got as far as one of their watering places called Al-Kudr – a watering spring belonging to Banu Sulaim, sixty kilometers south-east of Madinah. But Banu Sulaim had already fled the place and dispersed, leaving behind five hundred camels that were confiscated as spoils of war.

The Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) distributed the spoils among the Muslims after setting aside the one-fifth share allocated to Allah and His Messenger (PBBUH). He (PBBUH) stayed there for three nights and then returned to Madinah without encountering any fighting.

2. The *Ghazwah* of Dhi Amar – Banu Tha`labah and Muharib

News reached the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) that Banu Tha`labah and Muharib had joined forces at Dhi Amar (a watering spring in the land of Najd) for carrying out a raid on the outskirts of Madinah.

In turn, the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) decided to forestall their attack, and promptly assumed the offensive. He (PBBUH) set out at the head of four hundred and fifty fighters. Somewhere along the way, he (PBBUH) came across a man from Tha`labah and asked him about these tribesmen's whereabouts. The man disclosed to the Prophet (PBBUH) that once they heard of his advance, they would flee to the mountaintops, and he offered to join them as their guide [after he accepted the Prophet's (PBBUH) invitation to Islam]. Just as the man said, the raiders had no sooner heard of the Prophet's (PBBUH) approach and the size of his force than they fled to the mountaintops [i.e., they avoided open-field confrontation].

The Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) arrived at the location of their gathering – a watering spring called 'Dhi Amar' – and encamped there for several days before returning to Madinah without any fighting having taken place.

Several restless stirrings occurred from several Bedouin tribes. But, in fact, they were greatly in awe of the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH). Their hearts felt as if they would pound out of their chests with fear at learning of his mobilization to react with appropriate counteraction to any plots or plans they formed against him.

Second, Challenges from the Quraysh

Burning with indignation and the desire for revenge after the ignominious defeat suffered at Badr, the Quraysh began weaving plans and devising conspiracies against the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH). The following secret attempt made on his life is one example:

1. Assassination Attempt on the Prophet (PBBUH)

Shortly after the defeat at Badr, `Umair ibn Wahb Al-Jumahi sat with Safwan ibn Umayyah at Al-Hijr (the crescent-shaped area adjacent to the Ka`bah) lamenting their losses. Umair ibn Wahb was known as one of the most diabolical men of the Quraysh, who used to harm the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) and his Companions when they were in Makkah. His son, Wahb ibn `Umair, was among the captives taken at Badr. When `Umair mentioned their compatriots who had ended up buried in the well, Safwan (whose father was among those killed) said, “By Allah, there is no good in life now they are dead.”

“You are right, by Allah,” replied `Umair. “Were it not for a debt I cannot pay and children I fear would be lost if I am gone, I would ride to Muhammad to kill him. I have good cause: my son is captive in their hands.”

Safwan ibn Umayyah seized this opportunity and said, “Your debt is my responsibility. I will discharge it for you. And I will take care of your children with my own, as long as they live. They will lack nothing that is within my means.”

`Umair said, “Keep this agreement between us a secret, then.”

Safwan replied, “I will do so.”

`Umair had his sword sharpened and poisoned, and rode until he reached Madinah. While he was kneeling his camel at the door of the mosque, `Umar ibn Al-Khattab saw him and his sword. `Umar said, “Here is the dog, Allah’s

enemy, `Umar ibn Wahb! He has come only for an evil purpose.” `Umar went directly in to the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) and said, “O Prophet of Allah, here is Allah’s enemy, `Umar ibn Wahb. He has come wearing his sword.”

The Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) said, “**Bring him in to me.**” `Umar went up to `Umar, caught hold of his sword belt and seized him round the neck with it. Then he said to some Ansari men who were with him, “Go in to the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) and sit near him; and watch out for this villain. He is not to be trusted.”

In this manner, `Umar brought `Umar before the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) who, upon seeing him with `Umar grasping the sword-belt round his neck, said, “**Release him, O `Umar. Approach, O `Umar.**”

`Umar approached and said, “*An`im sababan* (Good morning).” This was the common greeting of the pre-Islamic Arabs. The Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) replied, “**Allah has honored us with a greeting that is better than yours, O `Umar. A greeting with peace [saying: *As-salamu `alaykum* (May Allah’s Peace be upon you)], which is the greeting of the people of Paradise.**”

`Umar replied, “By Allah, O Muhammad, it is new for me.”

He (PBBUH) asked, “**Why have you come, O `Umar?**”

`Umar replied, “I have come for the sake of this captive (my son) who is in your hands, so treat him kindly.”

He (PBBUH) asked, “**Why do you have a sword hanging from your neck?**”

`Umar replied, “Allah damn the swords. Have they done us any good?”

He (PBBUH) asked, “**Tell me the truth. Why have you come?**”

`Umar replied, “I have come only for this (reason I have told you).”

The Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) then said, “**No, but you and Safwan ibn Umayyah sat together at Al-Hijr remembering the people from the Quraysh**

who were buried in the well. You then said: ‘Were it not for a debt I owe and children I have, I would go out to kill Muhammad.’ Safwan then assumed responsibility for your debt and your children so you could kill me. But surely Allah will stand between you and that end.”

Stunned, `Umair said, “I testify that you are the Messenger of Allah. O Messenger of Allah, we used to call you a liar regarding the news from heaven you brought us and the revelations that came down to you. But this is a matter which only Safwan and I witnessed. By Allah, I know that no one could have informed you about it except Allah. Praise be to Allah Who has guided me towards Islam in this way.”

That same day, `Umair formally testified that there is no god but Allah and that Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah, and he became a Muslim. The Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) asked the Muslims present to teach `Umair about Islam, saying, **“Instruct your brother in his religion, teach him (how to recite and understand) the Qur’an, and free his captive for him.”** The Companions did as he (PBBUH) asked.

Following the departure of `Umair for Madinah, Safwan ibn Umayyah said with optimistic confidence to the Quraysh, “Rejoice! Good news will come to you a few days from now, which will make you forget the incident of Badr.”

Safwan enquired about `Umair from every traveler (coming from Madinah) until finally someone told him that he had become a Muslim. Furious at what he learned, Safwan swore never to speak to `Umair again and never to benefit him in any way whatsoever.

After his conversion, `Umair returned to Makkah and stayed there preaching Islam among the Makkans. Many embraced Islam through him.

2. The Expedition of Sawiq

Hostile activities were ongoing, with diverse plots and intrigues independently concocted and conducted by men such as Safwan ibn Umayyah

and other pagans. Meanwhile, Abu Sufyan was busy devising a military reprisal involving little risk but creating an impressive impact upon the other Arabs and would help retain the prestige of his people.

Abu Sufyan made a vow upon his return from Badr that no water would touch his head (i.e., he would not bathe) until he had attacked Muhammad (PBBUH). To fulfil his vow, in the month of Dhul-Hijjah 2 A.H. he set out at the head of two hundred horsemen from the Quraysh. He took the Najd route until he halted with his soldiers at Mount Thayb (about one post from Madinah).

When the darkness of night descended, Abu Sufyan proceeded alone until he came within the vicinity of Banu Al-Nadir (one of the three Jewish tribes in Madinah). He first went to the house of Huyai ibn Akhtab, a prominent leader and rabbi of Banu Al-Nadir, seeking his support. Huyai refused to open the door and admit him for being afraid of him. Abu Sufyan then went to Salam ibn Mishkam, who was the chieftain and treasurer of Banu Al-Nadir at that time. He admitted him and gave him secret tactical information about the Muslims.

Abu Sufyan left at the end of the night and re-joined his men. Afterwards, they headed to a district of Madinah called Al-`Uraid and attacked it. They cut and burned down some date-palm trees and killed an Ansari man and his ally who were there. Abu Sufyan thought that these actions fulfilled his oath, and he and his men took to their heels.

Upon being informed of the raid, the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) went in pursuit of the attackers as far as Qarqarat Al-Kudr but returned without being able to catch up with them. Abu Sufyan and his men rode as fast as they could, and to flee more quickly, they lightened their load by throwing away their provision bags of *Sawiq* (a kind of porridge made of wheat or barley).

The Muslims picked up these discarded provisions and brought them back with them, hence the expedition became known as “the Expedition of Sawiq.”

Third, Challenges from the Jews and *Mushrikin* inside Madinah

1. `Abdullah ibn Ubai Outwardly Embraces Islam and the Class of Hypocrites Emerges

As mentioned earlier, `Abdullah ibn Ubai ibn Salul harbored intense animosity towards the Prophet (PBBUH) and the Muslims. A lot of anger built up inside him because, being one of the leading men in Madinah, he was preparing to be crowned its king when the Prophet's arrival in the city cancelled the process and shifted people's attention away from him and onto the Prophet (PBBUH).

Then came the victory of Badr, and with the strength it added to the Muslims, `Abdullah ibn Ubai started to make a pretentious outward show of faith in Islam. On the inside, he was the same – his heart full of disbelief and hatred towards Islam and Muslims. He did not miss any chance to plot against both, aided by a group of Madinese *Mushrikin* people. He was unequalled by any of his counterparts and established himself as the chief of the hypocrites of Madinah; those who outwardly displayed belief while inwardly concealing their disbelief.

2. Tension, Fear, and Enmity on the Part of the Jews

The Jewish and *Mushrikin* communities of Madinah were deeply agitated by the outcome of Badr. It heightened their fears of the increasing power and influence of the Muslims. Hateful glances were exchanged between them and cast in the direction of the Muslims right after their victorious return from Badr. These soon transformed into provocations and conspiracies against them.

The Jewish members continued to stir up tumult and confusion among the Muslims. War arguments and challenges put forward by the Yathribite Jews to discredit the Prophet (PBBUH) were elaborated upon earlier in some detail. Briefly, their tactics and strategies focused upon the following aims:

- a. Dissemination of mendacious propaganda to provoke doubt and shake the faith of the Muslims.
- b. Creation of conflicts among the Muslims.
- c. Constriction of livelihood opportunities for new Muslim converts who were financially connected to them. If they happened to be indebted to the Jews, they would harass them day and night for repayment. If it was the other way around, and the Jews were the ones indebted to the Muslims, they would shirk their obligations and evade paying what they owed.
- d. **Open and collective breaching of the covenant of Madinah by the Jews of Banu Qaynuqa`:**

As already stated, there were three main Jewish tribes in Madinah: Banu Al-Nadir, Banu Qurayzah, and Banu Qaynuqa`. Of the three, Banu Qaynuqa` were the worst. They were the most spiteful and inveterate enemies to the Muslims, especially after the manifest victory that Allah (Exalted be He) gave them at Badr. They felt so frustrated and challenged that they began to harass any Muslim who visited their marketplace, and were unable to contain their prejudice and antipathy.

Banu Qaynuqa` lived in a district inside Madinah bearing their same name. They were goldsmiths, blacksmiths, and vessel makers by profession.

The Prophet (PBBUH) Is Anxious for Banu Qaynuqa`'s Guidance

The tyranny and harassment of Banu Qaynuqa` only intensified. When the situation began to get out of control, the Prophet (PBBUH) gathered the Jews of Banu Qaynuqa` in their marketplace and addressed words of guidance and admonition to them. He (PBBUH) warned them about further transgressions, saying, **“O assembly of Jews, beware lest Allah bring down upon you the same punishment that He brought down upon the Quraysh. Embrace Islam, for you know that I am a Prophet who has been sent (by Allah). You will find this in your scriptures and Allah’s Covenant to you.”**

Yet the Jews of Banu Qaynuqa` retorted angrily and bitterly, “O Muhammad, do not deceive yourself simply because you killed a bunch of the Quraysh who were inexperienced (in war) and did not know how to fight. If you fight us, you will know that we are the real men (fighters). You have never encountered people like us (on the battlefield).”

The Prophet (PBBUH) Restrains His Anger and Honors the Covenant of Madinah

Banu Qaynuqa`’s response was essentially a declaration of war and a breach of the terms agreed upon in the covenant they had made with the Prophet (PBBUH). It included reciprocal recognition and respect of rights, joint defense against external enemies, non-alliance with the Quraysh, and non-treachery.

However, in the face of provocation from Banu Qaynuqa`, the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) exercised restraint and continued to keep his covenant with them, which granted them protection on the condition of non-treachery, non-alliance with enemies, and non-harm.

The Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) advised the Muslims to show patience and forbearance, and to wait and see how the situation developed in the coming days.

The Battle of Banu Qaynuqa`

Banu Qaynuqa` showed increased hostility and boldness, which triggered an atmosphere of unrest. The tension continued and grew worse. The last straw came when one day a Muslim woman brought some merchandise to sell at Banu Qaynuqa`'s marketplace. She visited a Jewish goldsmith's shop and sat down to sell her goods when some Jewish youths who were present tried to harass her into uncovering her face, but she refused. The goldsmith then stealthily tied the edge of her garment to her back in such a way that when she stood up, her private parts became exposed. The Jews laughed at her while she screamed.

A Muslim man, outraged by what had occurred, attacked the Jewish goldsmith and killed him on the spot. The Jews retaliated by killing the Muslim man. His relatives then called for help from the other Muslims against the Jews, and the conflict escalated into a fight between them and Banu Qaynuqa`.

Laying Siege to Banu Qaynuqa`

The Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) was informed of what had happened at Banu Qaynuqa`'s marketplace, and he saw that the strategy of patience with the Jews of Banu Qaynuqa` was untenable. They openly violated the terms of the pact (the Constitution of Madinah), and he feared treachery on their part. He (PBBUH) was thus left with no other choice but to fight them¹; otherwise, the

¹ Following Allah's Commandment for such a situation, Al-Zuhri reported on the authority of `Urwah that Jibril (Gabriel) brought the following Qur'anic verse down to the Messenger of Allah (PBUH): "If you have strong reason to fear treachery from a people (with whom you have a treaty), throw back their treaty to them (i.e., publicly declare to them, before embarking on any action against them, that you have dissolved the treaty) so that both parties are on equal terms (equally informed of its termination; this way, you and they will be aware that a state of war exists between you and that the bilateral peace treaty is null and void). Surely Allah does not love the treacherous." (Al-Anfal 8:58) When Jibril had finished delivering this Qur'anic verse, the Messenger of Allah (PBUH) said, "I fear (treachery from) Banu Qaynuqa'." 'Urwah added: "It was on the basis of this Qur'anic verse that the Messenger of Allah (PBUH) advanced against them." This Qur'anic verse lays down a basic Islamic principle regulating relations: when two communities or nations have made a treaty with each other that will last for a definite period, both sides should adhere to its terms up to its termination. If one

Muslims and their authority in Madinah would be exposed to a real risk of collapse.

In the middle of Shawwal in the year 2 A.H., some twenty days after Badr, the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) set out with an army of three hundred men to the locality of Banu Qaynuqa`, having appointed Abu Lubabah ibn `Abdul-Mundhir in charge of Madinah during his absence.

The Jews of Banu Qaynuqa` barricaded themselves in their fortresses as soon as they heard that the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) was marching towards them. The Muslim army besieged them within their fortified places for fifteen consecutive days, preventing any of them from getting out. The siege ended when Allah (the All-Powerful) cast terror into the hearts of Banu Qaynuqa`. They descended from their forts to unconditionally submit themselves to the judgement of the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH).

An Ally's Intercession for Banu Qaynuqa`

After consulting his major Companions, the decision made by the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) regarding Banu Qaynuqa` was the execution of all their combatant tribesmen (in accordance with the violation provisions set forth in the Madinah Treaty).

The Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) gave orders for all the combatant men of Banu Qaynuqa` (around seven hundred warriors) to be tied up, at which point `Abdullah ibn Ubai appeared on the scene and started to play his hypocritical role. He pressed the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) to pardon them, saying, "O Muhammad, be kind to my allies!" on the grounds of the former alliance between these Jews and his tribe of Al-Khazraj during pre-Islamic times.

party breaches the treaty, the other side should make it known to them that the treaty has been annulled before starting any hostile actions, so that both parties are fully aware of where things stand. The Messenger of Allah (PBUH) said, **"Whoever is bound in a treaty with a people cannot untie any part of it or tie it harder until the treaty reaches its appointed term. Or, he should declare the treaty null and void so that they are both on equal terms."** [Trans. Note]

As the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) delayed answering, `Abdullah ibn Ubai repeated, "O Muhammad, be kind to my allies!" The Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) turned away from him, so he inserted his hand into the collar of the Prophet's (PBBUH) armor so as to restrain him from moving.

"Release me!" the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) said to him, the anger visible on his face. He (PBBUH) then said, **"Woe to you! Release me!"** But the hypocrite `Abdullah ibn Ubai persisted and said, "No, by Allah, I will not release you until you act charitably towards my allies. Here are four hundred unarmored and three hundred armored men who have defended me from both red and black people (i.e., defended me against all my enemies, Arabs and the non-Arabs alike), and you wish to mow them down in a single morning? By Allah, I am a man who fears the turns of fortune." The Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) accepted his intercession and said to him, **"They are yours."**

The Expulsion of Banu Qaynuqa`

Although only a month had passed since `Abdullah ibn Ubai had made an outward show of faith in Islam, the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) graciously treated this hypocrite as a Muslim (leaving his secret to Allah, Who would deal with him appropriately). He (PBBUH) decided to extend a favor and take a conciliatory stance towards `Abdullah ibn Ubai and other pagan allies of the Jews in Madinah in the hope of building bridges and removing enmity. Such a strategy was indeed the essence of maintaining peace in Madinah. This approach on his part would also help bring them closer to Islam.

The Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) then gave orders that Banu Qaynuqa should leave Madinah and settle somewhere far from his immediate vicinity. So the people of Banu Qaynuqa` emigrated to the city of Adhri`at (modern Daraa in Syria) and left the Prophet's (PBBUH) City, never to return, taking their mischief and evil with them.

The *Sariyya* (Squadron) of Zaid ibn Harithah

It took place in the month of Jumada Al-Akhirah in the year 3 A.H. This was the last and most successful confrontation undertaken by the Muslims before the Battle of Uhud.

The Quraysh Take an Uncommon Trade Route Via Iraq

After the defeat of the Quraysh at Badr and as the traditional summer trade caravan to Syria neared, the worries and confusion of the Quraysh began to escalate. Those trade worries were expressed by Safwan ibn Umayyah, who was delegated by the Quraysh to head their business trip to the Levant that year.

Safwan said to the Quraysh, “Muhammad and his Companions have ruined our trade. We do not know what to do with his men, who never leave the coastal region clear. The inhabitants of the coast have concluded peace treaties with them and the majority of them (Arab tribes living in the environs of Madinah) have joined them, so we do not know which road to take. If we remain in our homeland (without trade), we shall consume our capital and cannot maintain ourselves for long. Our settlement here (in Makkah) is solely dependent on conducting trade with Syria in the summer and Abyssinia (present-day Ethiopia) in the winter.”

During the course of the discussion, it was decided that this year, they would take their caravan to Syria along a different trade route, going across Najd to Iraq. Accordingly, Safwan set out at the head of the Qurayshi trade caravan carrying large quantities of silver and other merchandise worth about a hundred thousand dirhams.

The News about Taking the Iraq Route Leaks Out to Madinah

A Yathribite from Ghatafan (a massive Najdi tribe north of Madinah) named Nu`aym ibn Mas`ud Al-Ashja`i was in Makkah at the time, and he learned of

the preparations being made by the Quraysh to secure their summer trading caravan.

Nu`aym was not a Muslim yet. Upon returning to Madinah, he talked in detail about this caravan and its planned course. A Muslim man, Sulait ibn Al-Nu`man, heard the information from him and quickly reported it to the Prophet (PBBUH).

Zaid Sets off to Intercept the Qurayshi Caravan

The Prophet (PBBUH) immediately dispatched Zaid ibn Harithah with a hundred horsemen to intercept the caravan belonging to the Quraysh. They caught up with the caravan at a watering place in Najd known as Al-Qaradah. The men of the caravan, taken by surprise, fled without showing any resistance, leaving behind the entire caravan which the Muslims seized as spoils of war. They also captured the caravan's guide, Furat ibn Hayyan, who then embraced Islam at the hands of the Prophet (PBBUH). Zaid operated his squadron successfully and returned with his men to Madinah, bringing along the spoils of their mission, which the Prophet (PBBUH) distributed among the members of the squadron after deducting the one-fifth share of it.

The Serious Predicament Facing the Quraysh

This last successful operation carried out by Zaid turned the crisis of the Quraysh into a catastrophe. Plans of using alternative trading routes were completely foiled, and the very survival of the economy and dominion of the Quraysh in the region was at stake. Now they had only two avenues out of this impasse:

1. Either to abandon their arrogant, high-handed, and hateful attitude towards the Muslims and adopt the ways of peace, reconciliation, and freedom.

2. Or to launch a massive war that would restore their former prestige and supremacy and strike down the Muslims' military power to such an extent as to make it impossible for the Muslims to ever rise again, thereby seizing away any control they might have.

The Quraysh opted for the second, more complicated choice: war. And with a renewed grudge and increased determination of vengeance, they carried out vigorous preparations for a new round of fighting against the Muslims inside the Muslim territory (Madinah) to annihilate them. These and previous events formed the prelude to the Battle of Uhud.

The Battle of Uhud

The Quraysh Prepares for War

Ever since their defeat at Badr, the Quraysh had had no peace of mind. Subsequent events tossed more fuel on their fire and reinforced their hostility towards the Muslims. The military action led by Abu Sufyan, known as the Expedition of Sawiq, was inadequate and amounted to no more than a gesture. It paled even more in contrast to the remarkable success achieved by Zaid's squadron, which captured the Quraysh's entire caravan with its goods when they tried a less common route to Syria that went via Iraq.

The capturing of another of their caravans further ignited the Quraysh's desire for revenge. Because of these events, they decided to wage a comprehensive war against the Muslims to satisfy their rage and heal their wounded pride. They carried on the preparations for that war on two levels: one material and the other emotional.

First: The Material Preparation

1. Financial Preparation

Upon the return of Abu Sufyan with the rescued Makkan caravan (which he had managed to save and became the direct cause behind the Battle of Badr) and the return of the warriors who survived the battle, a decision was made by the chief dignitaries of the Quraysh to deposit the caravan's contents at *Dar Al-Nadwah* (Council House) so as to sell them and use the proceeds to prepare a huge army to fight the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH).

The caravan consisted of one thousand camels and yielded a profit of fifty thousand dinars. Thus, sufficient funds for the battle were secured.

2. Mobilization of the Combatants

In order to recruit a sufficient number of combatants, the Quraysh encouraged other tribe members who wished to participate in attacking the Muslims to volunteer and join their fight. They succeeded in mobilizing men from the tribes of Kinanah and the people of Tuhamah and Thaqif, including the Ahabish tribes (a mixed group of different tribal backgrounds living around Makkah).

Second: The Emotional Preparation

1. Using Poets to Stir up Men for War

The Quraysh devised several methods of recruiting fighters. They hired influential poets, renowned at the time for their skill in inciting people and fueling their rage and fervor for war. Pre-eminent among them was the poet Abu `Azzah Al-Jumahi, who was taken captive at the Battle of Badr and was graciously released by the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) without ransom, under his solemn vow not to aid anyone against him.

The Makkan leader Safwan ibn Umayyah met Abu `Azzah and tried to prevail upon him to rally the Arab tribes against the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) using his stirring poetry. At first, Abu `Azzah refused to take part because of the pledge he had made. He said to Safwan, "I gave my pledge to Muhammad that I would never aid anyone against him."

Finally, under Safwan's persistence, Abu `Azzah accepted. Safwan promised that he would make him a rich man once he returned safely from that war; or, if he got killed, to provide for his daughters. With this assurance, Abu `Azzah rose and began to incite the tribes to join the war through his poetry. The same persuasion for the same task was made with another poet, Musafi` ibn `Abd-Manaf Al-Jumahi.

2. Enticing Wahshi to Kill Hamzah

Jubair ibn Mut`im ibn `Adi had a paternal uncle named Tu`aymah ibn `Adi, who was slain by Hamzah in the Battle of Badr. He owned an Abyssinian slave named Wahshi. He was a skilled spear-thrower; his spear seldom missed its target. Jubair summoned Wahshi and said to him, "Go forth with the people (army), and if you kill Hamzah, Muhammad's paternal uncle, in revenge for my paternal uncle Tu`aymah, you will be set free." Delighted at the offer, Wahshi accepted.

Jubair was joined by another revenge seeker, Hind bint `Utbah (the wife of the Makkan leader Abu Sufyan), whose father, paternal uncle, and brother were all killed in the Battle of Badr. When she heard of Jubair's offer to Wahshi, she, in addition, promised to give him all the valuable ornaments she was wearing (anklets, necklaces, and earrings). She continued to goad him to kill Hamzah by saying to him whenever she passed by him, "Satisfy your vengeance and ours!" These two proposals sufficiently intensified Wahshi's enthusiasm for killing Hamzah.

3. Women Encouraging Men to Fight

A group of Qurayshi women insisted on accompanying the army to keep their spirits up prior to the fight. After lengthy debate, the Qurayshi dignitaries agreed that a group of their women would accompany the army to spur their warriors on, raise their courage for the battle, remind them of the fallen men of Badr, and discourage them from fleeing.

Thus, Hind bint `Utbah led fifteen other upper-class Makkan women who went forth with the Qurayshi troops, singing war songs and beating their tambourines and other musical instruments to incite them. In this way, the pagan army was both materially and emotionally prepared.

The Qurayshi Army Size

A year after the Battle of Badr, a strong retaliatory army had been mustered from among the Quraysh and the neighboring tribes allied to them. The army was made up of three thousand fighters in all, seven hundred of whom were mailed soldiers and two hundred of whom were horse-mounted cavalry, supported by three thousand camels loaded with weapons and supplies.

The entire army was under the command of Abu Sufyan ibn Harb. The horsemen were under the command of Khalid bin Al-Walid, assisted by `Ikrimah ibn Abu Jahl. The Banu `Abdul-Dar clan was assigned to bear the Makkan flag. It was first carried by clansman Talhah ibn Abu Talhah.

The Marching Out of the Qurayshi Army

Plans and preparations for the attack were completed and the Qurayshi army set out for Madinah. They proceeded until they reached Al-Abwa' (the burial place of the Prophet's (PBBUH) mother, Aminah) where some reckless Makkans, driven by zealotry, suggested exhuming her body. But the leaders of the Quraysh refused this suggestion, fearing that it might set a precedent for other Arabs, causing the same dishonor to be done to their buried ones in revenge.

The Makkan army resumed their march with a quickened pace up to Al-`Aqiq Valley. They halted at a place called `Ainain, where they camped at the foot of Mount Uhud, about five miles from Madinah. Their plan was not to break into Madinah. They wanted to avoid the difficulties of fighting in narrow streets and the danger of being ambushed and having rocks thrown at their soldiers from the top of the houses. They also decided not to fight the Muslims with their backs to the city, as this would give the Muslims the chance, at the prospect of imminent defeat, to flee back and barricade themselves in Madinah.

Madinah's Intelligence Discovers the Enemy's Planned Action

Living among the Makkans, Al-`Abbas, the Prophet's (PBBUH) paternal uncle, kept a close watch on the Quraysh's movements and military preparations. Although Al-`Abbas adhered to the faith of his forefathers and people, he was motivated to help his nephew Muhammad (PBBUH) by a sense of kinship and tribal solidarity, together with deep esteem for him. It was the same kind of sympathies that had previously moved him to accompany his nephew (PBBUH) during the making of Al-`Aqabah Pledge.

So, as soon as the Quraysh marched out against the Muslims in Madinah, Al-`Abbas wrote an urgent letter with detailed information about the Quraysh's imminent planned actions, war preparations, equipment, and the size of their army. Time was of the essence, and to get his letter delivered on time, he dispatched it with a trustful messenger from the tribe of Ghifar. He covered the distance of five hundred kilometers between Makkah and Madinah in just three days. Upon arriving in Madinah, he found the Prophet (PBBUH) in Quba' Mosque and handed him the letter.

Al-`Abbas's letter was read to the Prophet (PBBUH) by Ubai ibn Ka`b. The Prophet (PBBUH) asked him to keep its contents secret and hurried back to Madinah, directly to the house of the chief of the Ansar, Sa`d ibn Al-Rabi`, seeking his counsel. He told him about the contents of Al-`Abbas's letter and enjoined him to keep the matter secret. But at that particular time, Sa`d's wife was at home and overheard the private conversation between them, so the impending military action was no longer a secret.

The Prophet (PBBUH) then dispatched Anas and Mu'nis, the two sons of Fadalah, to obtain for him exact information as to the latest movements of the Qurayshi army. They found out that the Quraysh had approached Madinah and encamped nearby at Uhud, where they let their camels and horses loose to graze in some crop fields (at a place called Al-Samghah) belonging to Al-Ansar.

The Prophet (PBBUH) sent another final scout, Al-Hubab ibn Al-Mundhir ibn Al-Jamuh, who gathered information that confirmed to the Prophet (PBBUH) the news reported by Al-`Abbas. He also provided estimates about the Quraysh's numerical strength and equipment.

Madinah Raised to Emergency Status

Once the intelligence was confirmed, a state of emergency was declared throughout the city. The men stayed armed and ready at all times, even when praying, in anticipation of any surprise attack. A group of the Ansar volunteered to stand guard at the Prophet's (PBBUH) door all night, clad in their armour and holding their weapons. Among them were such men as Sa`d ibn `Ubadah, Usaid ibn Hudair, and Sa`d ibn Mu`adh. Other groups were responsible for protecting the city from any possible danger.

Continuous patrols of the pathways surrounding the city were conducted to observe and report any tactical movements of the enemy and keep on the alert for any sign of attack.

The Prophet (PBBUH) Consults with His Companions to Plan a Defense Strategy

The news was confirmed that the enemy was already camping at the gates of Madinah. Once precise tactical information had been supplied, the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) convened the judicious men among his Companions, whether they were true followers or just pretenders (i.e., hypocrites, as the Qur'an depicts them) to give their advice and make decisions on how to confront the enemy.

The Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) told them about a vision he had had of the approaching battle. He (PBBUH) said, **“I have seen, by Allah, something good (i.e., a vision of good omen). I saw cows being slaughtered, and I saw a notch in my sword's edge, and that I inserted my hand into well-fortified armor.”** He (PBBUH) interpreted “the cows” to be some of his Companions

getting killed in the battle, and “the notch in his sword’s edge” to be a man of his household getting killed, and “the well-fortified armor” to be Madinah.

The Prophet’s (PBBUH) Opinion: Staying Entrenched in Madinah

The Prophet (PBBUH) saw that they should remain fortified in Madinah and wait for the enemy. This would provide them with a strong advantageous position from which to fight the battle, leaving the Qurayshi forces outside in the open desert. If they tried to penetrate the city, the Muslims would be ready for them; the men would fight them face to face at the mouths of alleyways, and the women from the tops of the houses (hurling stones at them from above). They should maintain resistance until they had succeeded in repelling the enemy’s attack and inflicted defeat upon them.

On this particular occasion, and for his own concealed motives, the head of the hypocrites, `Abdullah ibn Ubai ibn Salul, approved of the Prophet’s (PBBUH) plan. He did so not out of conviction that this was the best strategic course of action, but because it guaranteed him the opportunity to withdraw from the battle securely and unnoticed. As we shall see, when the war erupted and the battle climaxed, Allah exposed his and his collaborators’ true designs, and laid bare for the first time their hypocrisy before all the Muslims.

Besides Ubai ibn Salul, some of the prominent Companions, such as Usaid ibn Hudair and Sa`d ibn Mu`adh, shared the Prophet’s (PBBUH) view of fighting the battle behind the fortifications of Madinah, rather than going out and meeting the enemy in the open field.

The Companions’ Zealous Opinion: Confronting the Enemy Outside Madinah

Some honorable Companions who had missed the Battle of Badr and were eager to fight the Quraysh, suggested to the Prophet (PBBUH) that they should

head outside of the city and engage the enemy in the open field. They zealously urged him to accept their point of view. One of them said, “O Messenger of Allah, we have been hoping for this day and asked it of Allah. And now He has brought it to us and drawn them to a close distance. So take us out to our enemy, or else they might think that we are too cowardly and too weak to fight them.”

Other Companions, like Hamzah ibn `Abdul-Muttalib, who had participated in the Battle of Badr and experienced the honor and joy of victory, said to the Prophet (PBBUH), “By the One Who has sent down the Book to you, I will not eat any food until I fight them with my sword outside of Madinah.”

The Prophet (PBBUH) Responds to the Majority’s Zealous Opinion

The policy of *Shura* (mutual consultation) as a basis for decision making was an integral part of the way of life established by Prophet Muhammad (PBBUH). He (PBBUH) did not make solitary decisions, but he discussed with his Companions in advance what should be done, except in situations where there was a divinely revealed text that necessitated a specific course of action.

Therefore, the Prophet (PBBUH) accepted the majority opinion voiced by his enthusiastic Companions and adopted the final decision that had arisen from their mutual consultation and negotiations, which was that the enemy should be faced in an open battlefield outside the walls of the city.

Readiness for the Battle

It was Friday; the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) led the Muslims in the Friday Prayer and then preached to the congregation that victory would be theirs as long as they clung to patience and perseverance. He (PBBUH) then commanded them to prepare for the battle.

After leading the people in the *`Asr* (Afternoon) Prayer, the Prophet (PBBUH) entered his house accompanied by his two Companions, Abu Bakr and `Umar. They helped him get dressed in his turban and battle clothes. He (PBBUH) put on his sword over his double armor (one over the other) and came out to the people.

Controversy and Blame for Opting for a Different Plan than that Advised by the Prophet (PBBUH)

The men were gathered outside the Prophet's (PBBUH) house and had started arguing among themselves. Usaid ibn Hudair and Sa`d ibn Mu`adh, who preferred the option of staying entrenched within Madinah, said to those who had suggested confrontation outside the city, "You have forced the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) to go out of Madinah and fight, even though instructions descend upon him from heaven. You should give him back the lead in the matter."

The second group regretted what they had done. When the Prophet (PBBUH) came out, they said, "O Messenger of Allah, we ought not to have disagreed with you. Do as you see fit. We ought not to have compelled you (to accept our opinion) when the matter rests under Allah's Command, and then yours." But the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) replied, "**It is not befitting a prophet to take off his armor after dressing in it until Allah decides between him and his enemy.**"

The Movement of the Muslim Army Exposes the Hypocrites

The Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) marched in the direction of Mount Uhud with an army of one thousand fighters. A hundred of them were armored, and there were not any horsemen. They proceeded onward till they reached a place near Uhud called Al-Shaykhain. Upon approaching the enemy's location, at such a close range that both parties saw one another, `Abdullah ibn Ubai ibn Salul

mutinied and withdrew with one-third of the Muslim army. That is to say, three hundred fighters deserted en masse and returned to Madinah, leaving the Prophet (PBBUH) with only seven hundred men against the three thousand fighters of the Quraysh and their allies.

To break away from the battle, Ibn Salul used the ostensible pretext of not listening to his advice, and left with his three hundred fellow hypocrites. He said: “He (the Prophet PBBUH) obeyed them and set out, and disobeyed me. By Allah, why we should get ourselves killed here, O men?”

Undoubtedly, the pretext of rejecting his opinion, which Ibn Salul put forward, was not the real cause behind his withdrawal; otherwise, he would not have marched out with the Muslim army as far as that place and would have opted out of participation from the beginning. Rather, the true motive behind his mutiny at such a critical moment was to create chaos and confusion among the ranks of the Muslims within the sight and hearing of their enemy.

Such a sudden withdrawal would break down the morale of the Muslim army and raise the morale of their enemy. As a result, the enemy would be encouraged and emboldened to more quickly destroy the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) and his sincere Companions and end the fight.

The hypocrite `Abdullah ibn Ubai ibn Salul was about to achieve his goal. Two Muslim clans, Banu Harithah and Banu Salamah, were on the verge of becoming disheartened and giving up the fight as well, but Almighty Allah granted them steadfastness in their hearts. Soon they were firm again. The following two Qur’anic verses were revealed on that occasion, encouraging the believers and reminding them that, despite their few numbers and supplies, Allah had granted them victory at Badr:

“When two parties from among you were about to lose courage, but Allah was their Protector; and upon Allah the believers should rely. And Allah has already given you victory at (the Battle of) Badr, when you were a weak little

force. Remain, then, conscious of Allah, so that you may be grateful.” (Al-`Imran 3:122-123)

The Remaining Muslim Army Advances to Uhud

The Prophet (PBBUH), with the remainder of his army, continued the march to Uhud. After the withdrawal of the hypocrites, the Prophet's (PBBUH) already small force was cut down to only seven hundred men. They were to confront the enemy's overwhelmingly superior and experienced force of three thousand fighters. But despite being poorly equipped and outnumbered, the remaining Muslim men were sincere and determined. Together with the Prophet (PBBUH), they advanced to Uhud, taking a semi-circle and a shorter track in order to arrive before the enemy.

The Prophet (PBBUH) Positioning and Arranging His Troops

At Uhud, the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) stationed his troops facing Madinah, with their backs to the hills of Uhud. This afforded him an ideal defensive position for confronting the enemy, which prevented his troops being encircled by the enemy's cavalry from their rear or right flank. But their left flank was exposed and vulnerable. To secure that direction and provide cover against outflanking maneuvers, the Prophet (PBBUH) placed a group of fifty skilled archers, under the command of `Abdullah ibn Jubair, on a nearby small rocky mount called `Aynain, located on the south-east of this open battlefield. That mountain later came to be called the Archers' Mount.

“Highly sensitive” would have been an understatement to describe the archers' defensive role in this battle. The Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) instructed the archers' commander, `Abdullah ibn Jubair, saying, **“Keep the horsemen away from us with your arrows, so that they do not come upon us from the rear. Hold firm your position, whether the battle goes for or against us. Let us not get attacked from your direction.”**

The Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) then directed his speech to the archers themselves: **“Even if you see the birds snatching us away, do not abandon your places until I send (commands) for you.”** And he (PBBUH) went on to say, **“If you see us defeating them, even to the point that we enter their encampment, do not abandon your places. And if you see us being killed, do not come to our aid or defend us, but keep shooting arrows at their horses. Horses will not move forward when arrows are being shot. Indeed, we will continue to prevail (today) so long as you stay firm in your places. O Allah, I make You bear witness upon them** (that I have told them their duty and mission for this battle).”

Finally, the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) gave orders to the rest of the soldiers not to begin fighting until he (PBBUH) gave the command. As for the rest of the army, the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) put Al-Mundhir ibn `Amr in command of the army’s right wing, and Al-Zubair ibn Al-`Awwam in command of the left wing, with Al-Miqdad ibn Al-Aswad as his assistant. In the vanguard, he (PBBUH) placed a select group of the bravest Muslims, and he assigned Mus`ab ibn Umair to carry the Muslim flag.

The Military Genius of the Prophet (PBBUH)

Such a wise and well-knit plan for the Muslim army revealed the Prophet’s (PBBUH) singular genius as a military leader, as evident in the following points:

- He (PBBUH) managed to occupy the best positions, despite his arrival at the battlefield later than the enemy.
- He (PBBUH) arrayed the bulk of his forces with their backs to Uhud Mount and let the rocky mountainside act as a shield for his army’s rear and right flank.
- He (PBBUH) closed a vulnerable gap in the defense of his left flank and rear by positioning a force of fifty archers on a hill, above the left flank, and gave them strict orders not to leave their posts under any circumstances.

- He (PBBUH) narrowed the choice scope for the enemy, who were compelled to fight in a geographically low land, obstructive in either victory or defeat. In the event of victory, it would disable them from reaping any benefits; and in the event they were defeated, it would hinder them from escaping.
- Through this strategy, the Prophet (PBBUH) was able to overcome the numerical superiority of his enemy.

Deployment and Boosting of the Muslim Army

When all men were positioned in their posts ready for the battle, the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) exhorted his Companions to show patience and steadfastness in fighting the fight. He (PBBUH) inspired them with a spirit of bravery and fortitude.

Holding in his hand a stretched-out sword, the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) asked, **“Who will take this sword and give it its due right?”** Several men, such as `Ali ibn Abu Talib, Al-Zubair ibn Al-`Awwam, and `Umar ibn Al-Khattab, rose to take it, but the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) withheld it from them until Abu Dujanah Simak ibn Kharashah stepped forward and asked, “What is its due right, O Messenger of Allah?” He (PBBUH) replied, **“That you strike the enemy’s faces with it until it bends.”** Abu Dujanah said, “I will take it and fulfil its right, O Messenger of Allah.” Upon this, the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) handed over the sword to him.

Abu Dujanah was exceptionally brave. He used to strut in pride in times of war. He had a red band, which, when he tied it around his head, people knew he was bent on fighting to death or victory. After being handed the sword by the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH), Abu Dujanah tied the red band around his head and started to swagger with pride and joy between the rows of fighters. At that, the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) said, **“This is a gait that Allah detests** (because

it indicates arrogance) **except in a situation like this** (because it helps raise the morale of other comrades).”

Deployment and Boosting of the Pagan Army

The *Mushrikin* arranged their troops in lines. As stated earlier, the general leadership was entrusted to Abu Sufyan ibn Harb. He was in the center position of the army. Khalid ibn Al-Walid was in command of the right wing, facing on the Muslim’s side Al-Zubair ibn Al-`Awwam, who led the left wing. `Ikrimah ibn Abu Jahl was in command of the left wing, facing on the Muslim’s side Al-Mundhir ibn `Amr, who led the right wing. Safwan ibn Umayyah was in charge of the infantry. During the battle, Banu `Abdul-Dar were responsible for carrying the Makkan flag. It was first hoisted by Talhah ibn Abu Talhah.

The *Mushrikin* kept reminding their fighters of their slain men at Badr and inflaming their emotions to encourage them to take revenge. The group of Qurayshi women who came with the army roamed between the lines, beating their tambourines, singing, spurring on, and encouraging the combatants to fight.

Attempts by the Quraysh to Split the Muslim Lines

The First Attempt of Causing Division

Shortly before the battle broke out, Abu Sufyan sent a message to the Ansar with the intention of sowing disunity and inducing them to abandon the Prophet (PBBUH). He said in his message, “Leave us alone to deal with our cousin (meaning the Prophet PBBUH), and we shall leave you alone. For we have no need to fight you.” The Ansar gave an immediate, harsh refusal. Their firmness of faith, as hard and uncompromising as the mountains, thus blasted the Quraysh’s first scheme.

The Second Attempt of Causing Division

When the Quraysh's first attempt did not work, they sent a Madinese traitor named `Abd `Amr ibn Sayfi for the same purpose of dissuading the Ansar from fighting. This man was known as Abu `Amir the Monk. After arriving in Madinah, the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) labeled him Abu `Amir Al-Fasiq (the evil-doer) for his open hostility and evil. He was the head of Al-Aws tribe during the pre-Islamic time, and when Islam gained ground in Madinah, he moved to Makkah to incite the Quraysh to start war against the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH).

On the day of the battle, Abu `Amir came to Uhud with a group of fighters consisting of fifteen Al-Aws tribesmen and several Makkan slaves. He claimed to his Makkan allies that his kinsfolk from the Muslims of Al-Aws would abandon Muhammad (PBBUH) and join the Makkan force as soon as he called upon them to do so. Deluded by this false expectation, Abu `Amir stepped onto the battleground, called out to his people, and announced his identity, "O kinfolk of Al-Aws! I am Abu `Amir." But they replied, "May Allah never please an eye by the sight of you, O corrupt one!" and hurled stones at him. Humiliated, Abu `Amir retreated with his men to the Quraysh's lines, declaring, "Indeed, evil has befallen my people since my departure." Silent contempt and sarcastic glares were shot at him by the Quraysh from every direction.

The Fighting Begins

Duel

The two forces drew nearer to one another. Then came the stage of single swordfights, as was the custom at the start of wars at the time. Talhah ibn Abu Talhah, the bearer of the Makkan flag and one of the Quraysh's bravest fighters, came out riding a camel, challenging anyone from the Muslim army to engage in a duel with him.

Due to his extreme valor, the people hesitated, then `Ali ibn Abu Talib stepped forward and accepted his challenge. It was only a matter of minutes before `Ali killed him with a lethal blow. Watching, the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) cried out “*Allahu Akbar* (Allah is Greater)” and the rest of the Muslims cried out the same with him.

The pagan flag fell to the ground. Shaybah, Talhah’s brother, was the next to lift it up and resume the challenge. Hamzah came out for him and killed him in a short duel. Next was Musafi` ibn Talhah ibn Abu Talhah. He took the flag and was soon killed, and so forth, until six men from one family had been killed: the household of Abu Talhah ibn `Uthman ibn `Abdul-Dar.

The pagan flag remained lying on the ground. No one from Banu `Abdul-Dar was left to take it over except an Abyssinian slave of theirs, who was also killed. The pagan flag stayed on the ground.

Flaring Up of Fighting

The fall of the *Mushrikin*’s flag ignited the courage of the Muslims. They rushed forcefully through the lines of the pagan troops, displaying outstanding acts of bravery and heroism. Among the most remarkable examples of their valiant fighting were the following:

Abu Dujanah and His Death Headband

With the Prophet’s (PBBUH) sword in one hand and the death band tied around his head, Abu Dujanah penetrated the enemy’s lines, killing any of them he came across, until he split and dispersed their ranks and came close to some people who were fiercely inciting the pagan soldiers to fight.

On raising his sword to attack their leader, Abu Dujanah heard a shrieking voice. Realizing that the voice was that of a woman, Hind bint `Utbah, he lowered his sword and abstained from killing her out of too much respect for the

Prophet's (PBBUH) sword to strike a woman with it. [The Arabs believed that it was cowardice for a man to harm a woman].

Hamzah and His Strong, Brave Fighting

Hamzah fought like a lion, fearless and valiant. He broke boldly into the center of the enemy's battalions and fought with unparalleled bravery and success in all his engagements with the enemy. He not only effectively contributed to the killing of all the challengers who carried the flag on the pagan side, but also battled with and defeated several of the enemy's most distinguished and powerful fighters.

Hamzah, Allah's Lion, Assassinated

Wahshi, the slave and expert spear-thrower owned by Jubair ibn Mut'im, had no interest in the battle surrounding him. His sole desire was to kill Hamzah and get emancipated. Wahshi also looked forward to the fulfillment of the promise made to him by Hind bint `Utbah, to give him all the jewelry she wore once he killed Hamzah.

Here, in his own words, Wahshi explains his motives and how he killed Allah's Lion, Hamzah, "I went forth with the people. Being an Abyssinian (Ethiopian), I was adroit at throwing spears, like all Abyssinians. I have never missed my target. When the two sides met in battle, I came out seeking Hamzah, searching for him until I spotted him in the middle of the people. He was like an ashen camel (because of the battlefield dust), felling everybody with his sword so that nothing stood in his way. I shook (balanced) my spear and when I was perfectly satisfied with it, I hurled it at him. It penetrated his lower abdomen – between his navel and pubic region – and came out between his legs. He made a move towards me but was overpowered (by the spear's stroke) and collapsed to the ground. I left my spear lodged in him until he died. I then retrieved my spear and headed back to the camp. I sat there, since I had no business with anyone

but him. I only killed him to attain my freedom. When I returned to Makkah, I was freed.”

Hamzah, always first in the front battle lines, was killed in this manner; not face to face, as adversary champions meet in the battlefield, but cowardly assassinated like other dignified men who were stealthily slain in the darkness of night.

Victory on the Muslim Side on the Morning of Uhud

Despite the great loss through the martyrdom of Hamzah, the Lion of Allah and His Messenger (PBBUH), the small Muslim army continued to control the situation. This was due to the Prophet's (PBBUH) brilliant positioning of the archers at the mountain passes to rebel the enemy's cavalry, thus both obstructing their advance and covering the Muslims from any rear attacks. But on all scales, a little army of seven hundred men facing a force five-fold superior could not have withstood this without Allah's Help that came with the firm faith and superb bravery shown by the Muslims for Allah's Cause.

After the fall of the pagan flag upon the ground, no one else had courage enough to approach and hoist it. It stayed flung, and the pagan army's lines began to break up. Their soldiers retreated and fled from the battlefield.

Through courageous and steadfast fighting, the Muslims were successful; the Quraysh's force was shattered and their troops of three thousand warriors were retreating. Their women were about to be taken captive. The Muslims chased after their fleeing soldiers, killing whom they could until they had drawn the enemy away from their camp.

The enemy's camp lay before the Muslim forces, abandoned. Thinking they had won the battle, the Muslims stopped fighting to gather the large booty left behind. But the Quraysh's cavalry posted on the right and left wings, under the

command of Khalid ibn Al-Walid and `Ikrimah ibn Abu Jahl, remained firm and powerful, waiting for an opportune moment to join the fighting.

The Archers Disobey the Prophet's (PBBUH) Orders

When the archers stationed on Mount Aynain, under the Prophet's (PBBUH) strict orders not to leave their positions whether the Muslims attained victory or sustained defeat, saw some Muslim soldiers collecting the spoils of war, they were overcome by love of material goods. They asked their leader, `Abdullah ibn Jubair, to permit them to go down and collect their share, but he refused, reminding them of the Prophet's clear orders before the battle. They insisted and replied, "The Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) did not intend so, and Allah has dishonored and defeated the *Mushrik*in." So most of the archers saw no purpose in further maintaining their positions, since the battle had ended. They deserted their posts and rushed to the Quraysh's camp, exposing the Muslims' backs to the enemy's horsemen. Only `Abdullah ibn Jubair and ten archers abided by the Prophet's (PBBUH) orders and continued firm in their defensive positions on Aynain.

The Tide of War Turns Against the Muslims

Witnessing the signs of defeat on his army, Abu Sufyan asked, "Are we going to be defeated again?" The answer came from Khalid ibn-Al-Walid, the commander of the Makkan right-wing cavalry. "No, the battle has not ended yet." For he noticed that the archers had left their positions on top of the mount.

Khalid seized that golden strategic opportunity. He swiftly turned back with his horsemen and went around the Archers' Mount to come at the Muslims from behind. They successfully encircled the Muslim rear and soon killed `Abdullah ibn-Jubair, along with his ten archer companions, and occupied the mountainside.

The horsemen under Khalid's command started shouting out war cries to announce this new development of events to the rest of the Makkan army, who stopped fleeing and began rallying. A woman among them, named `Amrah bint `Alqamah Al-Harithiyah, raised the fallen flag of the disbelievers. They gathered around it, calling one another back to the battlefield to resume the fight and renew their attack on the Muslims.

Upon seeing Khaled's successful outflanking movement from the east, `Ikrimah, the commander of the left-wing cavalry, assembled his men and attempted to outflank the Muslims from the west. The Muslims were now surrounded and being attacked on two fronts: front and rear.

From that point on, the tide of war turned against the Muslims. They threw away whatever spoils they had taken, drew their swords again, and began fighting. But it was far too late. Their army's ranks were broken up and scattered, their cohesion was utterly lost, and their forces shifted from the offensive to the defensive in a disorderly, confused manner, with no plan and under no leadership.

Quick Thinking and Brave Action by the Prophet (PBBUH)

The Prophet (PBBUH) was following the battle from his command headquarters at the back of the ranks, along with nine of his Companions who were guarding him. Having seen the surprise flank attack executed by Khalid ibn-Al-Walid, by which the situation was completely turned around into the disbelievers' favor, the Prophet (PBBUH) had two courses of action: either flee with his nine Companions to a place of safety and leave his army to its fate, or put himself in harm's way to try and save his trapped army. To do this, he (PBBUH) would have to gather his Companions around him and together they would form a strong front with which to break through the enemy's lines to his surrounded army and reassemble on the hills of Uhud, taking all the dangerous risks involved in that path.

The Prophet's (PBBUH) presence of mind, combined with his genuine courage, made him opt for the second course. He (PBBUH) called out to his Companions as loudly as he (PBBUH) could, "**Come to me, O servants of Allah! I am the Messenger of Allah.**" He (PBBUH) was doing so while well aware that the disbelievers would hear and recognize his voice faster than the Muslims. As expected, the disbelievers, who were closer to the Prophet (PBBUH), heard him calling out to his Companions and got to him before any of them could.

Death Rumor of the Prophet (PBBUH) Causing Chaos Among the Muslim Ranks

Meanwhile, on the battlefield, a *Mushrikin* man named Ibn Qami'ah killed Musa`b ibn `Umair, who bore a strong resemblance to the Prophet (PBBUH). Because of this Ibn Qami'ah jubilantly started a rumor that Muhammad (PBBUH) had been killed. That lie flew through the ranks of both sides, which escalated the confusion and disorder among the Muslims and almost destroyed the morale of the fighters. During that tense time of war, the Muslims fell into one of three groups, depending on how they lived out the experience of loss and defeat:

The first group: They became overwhelmed with panic when the Muslims became encircled, and they fled the battlefield to Madinah. But, feeling ashamed to enter it, they hid in the mountains for three days before they returned to the city. This group was only a few men.

The second group: They mingled with the pagan soldiers, and because of the confusion and chaos that reigned, they could no longer distinguish between friend and foe and began to fight against one another. [This resulted in at least one death by error: the death of Al-Yaman, Hudhayfah's father].

Other men were very shocked and disheartened by the false news of the Prophet's (PBBUH) death. They tossed their weapons to the ground and stopped

fighting. Anas ibn Al-Nadr (Anas ibn Malik's paternal uncle) passed by these men, who had cast away their weapons, and asked them, "What are you waiting for?" The replied, "The Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) has been killed." Anas said, "What good is life after him? Get up and die on the same path (Islam) on which the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) has died." He then faced the enemy and fought hard and was outstanding. He was only killed after a most vigorous fight, in which he killed many *Mushrikin* fighters and sustained over eighty wounds across his body by sword strikes, arrow shots, and spear stabs, leaving his body unrecognizable. Nobody was able to identify him except his sister, and only by his fingertips.

Through such extraordinary examples of heroism and perseverance shown by Anas ibn Al-Nadr and other men, the Muslim soldiers regained their high spirits and firm resolve to die fighting and not surrender. They picked up their weapons and started attacking the enemy's forces until they managed to break out from encirclement and regroup at a secure place, following a fierce battle with the enemy. This second group constituted the majority of the Muslim army.

The third group: They cared for nothing other than the Prophet's (PBBUH) safety and protectively surrounded the place where he (PBBUH) was. They were thirty in number and included such eminent Companions as Abu Bakr Al-Siddiq, `Umar ibn Al-Khattab, `Ali ibn Abu Talib, Sa`d ibn Abu Waqqas, Talhah ibn `Ubaidullah, Abu `Ubaidah ibn Al-Jarrah, `Abul-Rahman ibn `Awf, and Abu Dujanah. They were at the front battle line and, sensing danger for the Prophet's (PBBUH) life, they immediately joined the group of the nine Companions who were accompanying him as guards. With them, they occupied a front position in defense.

The Fighting Intensifies around the Prophet (PBBUH) and His Injury

While the Muslims' main force was surrounded "like millet between two grinding stones" and resisting tenaciously, the battle around the Messenger of

Allah (PBBUH) closed in, growing more and more ferocious. As previously mentioned, when the *Mushrikin* forces started outflanking and encircling the Muslims, there were only nine Companions around the Prophet (PBBUH) at his command headquarters. As soon as the Prophet (PBBUH) called out to the Muslims, “**Come to me, O servants of Allah! I am the Messenger of Allah,**” the *Mushrikin* heard and recognized his voice. They rushed at him from all directions at once and began attacking him before any of the other Muslims could get to him.

The only men the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) had with him were his nine Companions – seven of whom were from Al-Ansar (Supporters from Madinah) and two from Al-Muhajirun (Emigrants from Makkah). All seven Ansari men were killed, after having fought with matchless valor and self-sacrifice in defense of Prophet Muhammad (PBBUH), who now remained alone with only the two Qurayshi men, Talhah ibn `Ubaidullah and Sa`d ibn Abu Waqqas.

These moments were the most precarious in the Prophet’s (PBBUH) life, presenting his disbelieving enemies with the perfect opportunity to kill him, of which they took advantage as they concentrated their attack on him.

Talhah and Sa`d Put Up a United, Heroic Defense

Talhah and Sa`d were the final two men left to fend off the relentless attack from the enemies, who were determined to kill the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH). But although they were just two individuals, they stood heroically against the *Mushrikin* and battled with rare bravery. They were both among the best Arab archers and kept on shooting their arrows until they completely thwarted all the enemy’s attempts to achieve their aim.

Talhah ibn `Ubaidullah: He fought fiercely to defend the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) and literally acted as a human shield for him. He caught an arrow that was coming at the Prophet (PBBUH) and as a result his hand became

paralyzed and all his fingers were cut off. Therefore, whenever the Battle of Uhud was mentioned, Abu Bakr Al-Siddiq would say, “That was Talhah’s day.”

Sa`d ibn Abu Waqqas: He fought by the side of the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH), showering the enemy with arrows. He was so adroit in throwing that the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) said to him while handing him the arrows, **“Throw, Sa`d, may my father and mother be sacrificed for you.”** This attested to his efficiency, for the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) was never heard mentioning his parents to anyone other than Sa`d.

Injuries Sustained by the Prophet (PBBUH)

Despite the great courage shown by the Companions in defending the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH), he sustained multiple wounds from the many pagans surrounding and attacking him, and because of the strong ardor with which they pursued him. The injuries inflicted upon him included:

- He (PBBUH) was hit by `Utbah ibn Abu Waqqas with a stone that caused him to fall on his side; his bottom right incisor was injured, and his lower lip was wounded.
- He (PBBUH) was attacked by `Abdullah ibn Shihab Al-Zuhri, causing a cut in his forehead.
- He (PBBUH) received a heavy sword blow on his shoulder by `Abdullah ibn Qami`ah. It was not strong enough to break his two armors, so he dealt him another blow at his cheeks, as violent as the first one, causing two links of the Prophet’s (PBBUH) iron helmet to penetrate and get lodged in the flesh of his face.
- During this fierce attack, he (PBBUH) fell into one of the holes that were dug and hidden (covered over) by Abu `Amir Al-Fasiq to act as tunnels to entrap the Muslims. He (PBBUH) lost consciousness and sustained abrasions to both knees. He (PBBUH) was helped out of it by Talhah and `Ali.

The Companions Start Gathering around the Prophet (PBBUH)

With all these incidents happening in quick succession, the battle shifted dramatically in the Quraysh's favor while the prominent Companions were engaged in the frontlines of battle.

As soon as they realized that the situation was changing course and heard the Prophet's (PBBUH) voice rallying them, they hurried to his side. But by the time they reached him, he (PBBUH) was already wounded and seven of the Ansar were already martyred. There were only two men left with the Prophet (PBBUH), Sa`d and Talhah, and they were fiercely struggling to defend him.

The Companions who reached the Prophet (PBBUH) encircled him, forming a fence around him with their bodies and weapons. His cave companion, Abu Bakr Al-Siddiq, was the first to come rushing to his defense, closely followed by Abu `Ubaidah ibn Al-Jarrah. They found Talhah severely wounded and lying unconscious near the Prophet (PBBUH), who said to them, **“Take care of your brother. He has (by his action) rendered himself worthy (of Paradise).”**

The Prophet's (PBBUH) wounds were also bleeding. His Companions saw that the two rings of his helmet had pierced his cheeks. Abu `Ubaidah insisted on being the one to extract them. Very slowly, he started pulling them out with his mouth and, in the process, lost two of his own front teeth. When they approached Talhah to treat his wounds, they found over sixty stab wounds in his body, and all his fingers were cut.

Within a short time, a group of the bravest Muslims gathered around the Prophet (PBBUH), forming a protective circle around him. Among them were `Ali ibn Abu Talib, Abu Dujanah, Mus`ab ibn `Umair, Malik ibn Sinan, the great Muslim Lady Umm `Umarah (Nusaibah bint Ka`b), `Umar ibn Al-Khattab, and Hatib ibn Abu Balta`ah.

“O Allah! Guide My People for They Do not Know”

The number of the *Mushrikin* gathered increased, and their attacks on the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) became stronger and severer, which placed a massive task on the shoulders of the Muslims defending him. The following is an eye witness account narrated by Nafi` ibn Jubair, who said, “I witnessed the Battle of Uhud and watched how the arrows were being hurled from all directions at the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH), who was in the midst of them. But they were all warded off from him.” Then, as a result of the enemy’s renewed and intensified charges, the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) fell injured into one of the holes dug as traps for the Muslims by Abu `Amir Al-Fasiq.

The Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) was helped out of the hole with blood flowing down his face. He (PBBUH) started wiping the blood off his face, saying, **“How can a people prosper who besmear the face of their Prophet with blood when he is calling them to their Lord?”** He (PBBUH) was silent for a while, and then said, **“O Allah, guide my people for they do not know.”**

Unusual Scenes of the Believers’ Resolute Fighting in Defense of the Prophet (PBBUH)

In the course of the attack, the Muslims fought to defend the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) with unsurpassed tenacity, endurance, and most of all sacrifice that was, and will remain, peerless in the history of humanity, some instances of which are as follows:

1. **Talhah, Sa`d, `Ali, and Abu `Ubaidah:**It has already been narrated how Talhah ibn `Ubaidullah and Sa`d ibn Abu Waqqas fought with indomitable courage and tireless zeal to defend the Prophet (PBBUH) after the martyrdom of seven men from Al-Ansar in this cause. Remarkable strength and valiance were also displayed by `Ali ibn Abu Talib and Abu `Ubaidah ibn Al-Jarrah.

2. **Hatib ibn Abu Balta`ah:** He pursued `Utbah ibn Abu Waqqas – the man who assaulted the Prophet (PBBUH) with a stone causing him to fall to the ground and sustain a cut lip, a wounded face, and broken (lower) front teeth. Hatib was able to intercept him and strike off his head with his sword.
3. **Abu Dujanah Simak ibn Kharashah:** He placed himself as a shield in front of the Prophet (PBBUH) and exposed his back to the enemy’s barrage of arrows. Arrows struck his back as he leaned over to protect the Prophet (PBBUH) until there were many stuck in it, but he remained firm in this position and did not move.
4. **Umm `Umarah Al-Ansariyah:** She came out early to the battlefield with a waterskin to provide relief by walking around offering water to the exhausted, the thirsty, and the wounded. When the tides of war turned drastically against the Muslims, she cast away her waterskin, snatched up a sword, and joined the fighters who remained firmly around the Prophet (PBBUH), defending him from the relentless attacks. She, along with the Muslim men, stood against Ibn Qami’ah, who was a tough pagan fighter. He struck a blow to her shoulder with his sword that inflicted a deep, hollow wound on her. She returned several blows with her sword, but the two armors he was wearing protected him. She continued to fight, sustaining as many as twelve wounds in that battle.
5. **Mus`ab ibn `Umair:** He fought fiercely in defense of the Prophet (PBBUH) to fend off Ibn Qami’ah and other attackers. He was the flag bearer of the Muslim army and carried it firmly in his right hand. The *Mushrikin* fiercely attacked Mus`ab to make him drop the flag. Ibn Qami’ah struck Mus`ab on his right hand, which was holding the flag, and cut it off. Mus`ab grabbed the flag with his left hand and stood firm against the disbelievers. Ibn Qami’ah moved in close and cut off his left hand. Mus`ab leaned on the flag and held it to his chest with his upper arms, all the while reciting, “[And Muhammad is only a Messenger; all the \(other\) Messengers have passed away before him.](#)” (Al-`Imran 3:144) Ibn Qami’ah then thrust a spear through him and killed him. Because of Mus`ab’s close resemblance to the Prophet

(PBBUH), Ibn Qami'ah shouted, "Muhammad has been killed!" This rumor circulated quickly and significantly impacted the course of the battle, as was previously related.

The Cessation of Fighting

Once the Quraysh heard Ibn Qami'ah shouting out, "Muhammad has been killed!" their wild excitement over the prospect of killing him abated. In their belief that the Prophet (PBBUH) was dead, the key impetus for them was gone, as they thought that their main aim had been attained. The fighting slackened and then stopped, and instead the pagans turned their attention to mutilating the dead Muslims.

On the other side, as was previously mentioned, the false report of the Prophet's (PBBUH) death adversely affected the Muslims who had not been near him (PBBUH) on the battlefield. They disbanded and suffered low morale and desertion because of the rumored reports of his death.

The Prophet (PBBUH) Resumes the Struggle

After the martyrdom of Mus`ab, the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) handed the flag to `Ali ibn Abu Talib, who continued to fight fiercely alongside the other Companions surrounding the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH). He (PBBUH) insisted they maintain secrecy and not deny the news of his death, so the Quraysh would not amass their forces in larger numbers and renew the onslaught against them. Only then was the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) able to make his way to Mount Uhud and join the rest of his encircled army at that safe position to resume the struggle.

“Rejoice! The Prophet (PBBUH) Is Alive, Not Dead”

The first person to see the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) alive and approaching his troops following the rumor of him being killed was Ka`b ibn Malik. Ka`b immediately shouted at the top of his voice, “O Company of Muslims, rejoice! Here is the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) alive! He (PBBUH) has not been killed!” The Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) gestured for him to keep silent so as not to expose his location to the *Mushrikin*, but Ka`b’s voice had already been heard by the Muslims. They at once rushed towards the source of the loud and enthusiastic cries and assembled themselves around the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH). Then the Muslim troops, after being gathered together again, started to move with him in an organized withdrawal to a defensive position on the nearby mountain pass, while fighting their way through the attacking enemies.

Attempts to Hamper the Muslims’ Retreat

Ka`b ibn Malik’s shouts worked differently on the Quraysh. Most of them were incredulous. They regarded Ka`b’s cries as only a trick to boost the morale of the Muslims and rally them to fight again. However, despite incredulity on the part of those who heard Ka`b from the Quraysh, a few of them hurried towards the Muslims to verify what they had heard and hamper their process of retreat up the hillock of Uhud.

Ubai ibn Khalaf Is Confronted and Killed

Ubai ibn Khalaf – one of the pursuers renowned for his wickedness – caught up with the Messenger (PBBUH) as the *Mushrikin* were chasing the Muslims retreating up the hill. He was saying, “Where is Muhammad? Let me not be saved if he is saved (i.e., this will be a fight to the death).” When Ubai drew nearer on horseback, the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) took a spear from Al-Harith ibn Al-Simmah and stabbed him in the neck, through a tiny hole in his armor. This one

stroke threw him down off his horse and he rolled, over and over, on the ground. He then returned to the Quraysh and died on the way back to Makkah.

Retreat to a Safe Mountainous Pass

The Prophet (PBBUH) continued to withdraw with his army to the cover of Mount Uhud. During the withdrawal, a large rock came their way that had to be climbed over, but the Prophet (PBBUH) was too badly wounded and too heavy due to his double armor to climb it. Talhah ibn `Ubaidullah, despite his own wounds, sat beneath him and lifted him up until he stood upright.

Upon reaching the summit of the mountainous pass of Uhud, `Ali ibn Abu Talib went away, filled his leather shield with water from a spring in Uhud, and began to pour it on the Prophet's (PBBUH) face and head to wash off the blood. When his daughter Fatimah (who joined them at the mountain pass) saw that the water only caused more blood to flow out of his injuries, she took a piece of a straw mat, burned it, and placed it over his wounds, which stopped the bleeding.

The *Mushrikin's* Last Attempt and the Empty Battlefield

For the Quraysh, nothing was certain about the Prophet's (PBBUH) fate. Rather, they were almost certain of his death. Yet, in a last attempt to get to the Prophet (PBBUH), a group of the Qurayshi cavalry, led by Khalid ibn Al-Walid and Abu Sufyan, went up the mountain where the Muslims had taken a defensive position uphill. They were fought off by `Umar ibn Al-Khattab and a group of the Companions, who successfully drove them back down the mountain. Khalid had by then realized the futility of launching further attacks and retreated along with the rest of the Qurayshi soldiers.

Exhausted and overwhelmed, the Muslims gathered themselves around the Prophet (PBBUH), who led them in the `Asr (Afternoon) Prayer, seated, because

of the wounds he had suffered, and the Muslims behind him also performed their prayer in a sitting position.

Finally, the fighting ceased, and the battleground became empty.

Mutilation of Muslim Martyrs

With the end of fighting, the mutilation began. Some Makkan men, and also some women, indulged in this savage act of revenge, cutting off the ears, noses, and genitals of the martyrs, and ripping open their bellies. However, no one matched Hind bint `Utbah, Abu Sufyan's wife. She walked among the dead Muslims, searching for Hamzah's body. She tore open his liver and chewed it, but, unable to swallow it, she spat it out. She mutilated him by cutting off his nose, ears, and other body parts. She ordered her female companions to do the same, and they proceeded to mutilate the other dead Muslims. Then, having given of all her jewelry to Wahshi, she made a necklace and anklets from the cut-off ears and noses of the martyrs.

Abu Sufyan's Challenge and Umar's Response

The hideous deed of mutilating the Muslim martyrs ended, and Abu Sufyan started looking for the Prophet's (PBBUH) dead body among those killed to make certain of Ibn Qami'ah's report, but he did not find him.

Just as the *Mushrikin* completed their preparations and were ready to depart, Abu Sufyan stood on a high rock and yelled to the Muslims at the top of his voice, "Is Muhammad among you?" The Prophet (PBBUH) gestured his Companions to keep silent. Abu Sufyan repeated his question twice without getting an answer. He then asked, "Is Ibn Abu Quhafah (i.e., Abu Bakr) among you?" Again, he received no answer. He then asked, "Is Umar ibn A-Khattab among you?" Still, no answer.

Abu Sufyan, somehow satisfied with this silence, turned and addressed his tribespeople and, in an assured voice, said, “As for those three, you have finally been ridden of them.” Abu Sufyan signaled out these three men in particular for being the driving force behind the establishment of Islam. He and his people knew this quite well.

The Quraysh were relieved to hear this from Abu Sufyan. They were all so weary and exhausted that they no longer had the desire or the power to continue fighting. Listening to this false assurance, `Umar could not help but shout back to Abu Sufyan, “You are lying, O enemy of Allah. Those whom you have just mentioned are still alive. Allah has preserved that which grieves you.” At this, Abu Sufyan replied, “Victory in war alternates between the two sides. Today is in exchange for the Day of Badr (i.e., Uhud is the vengeance for Badr).” He then jubilantly cried, “Be high, O Hubal (one of their idols)!” The Prophet (PBBUH) ordered `Umar to answer him back and say, **“Allah is Higher and more Sublime. They (Badr and Uhud) are not equal. Our dead ones are in Paradise; your dead ones are in Hell.”**

Abu Sufyan Wants to Confirm the Prophet’s (PBBUH) Death

Up until then, Abu Sufyan still had some hope that Ibn Qami’ah had been truthful in his claim and that `Umar was deceiving him. He called upon `Umar to approach, saying, “Come to me, O `Umar.” The Prophet (PBBUH) ordered `Umar to go and see what he wanted. When `Umar came near, Abu Sufyan said to him, “I beseech you in Allah’s Name, O `Umar, have we killed Muhammad?” `Umar replied, “By Allah, you have not, and he is listening to what you are saying now.” Abu Sufyan said, “I regard you as more truthful and reliable than Ibn Qami’ah.”

Abu Sufyan Tries to Absolve Himself of the Atrocious Mutilation

Abu Sufyan then called out, “Some of your dead have been mutilated. By Allah, I am neither satisfied nor angry with that (action), and I have neither commanded nor forbidden it.”

Abu Sufyan Challenges the Muslims to a New Encounter at Badr

As Abu Sufyan, and those accompanying him, turned to ride down the mountain, he called out in defiance of the Muslims, “Your meeting place is Badr next year.” The Prophet (PBBUH) told one of his Companions to answer, “Yes, it is an appointment between us.”

The Quraysh Depart and the Prophet (PBBUH) Tracks Their Movements

The Quraysh left the battleground and settled at their previous camp area before the battle. To make sure that the Quraysh’s next destination was Makkah, not Madinah, the Messenger of (PBBUH) sent `Ali ibn Abu Talib to follow them. He (PBBUH) said to `Ali, **“Go out in the people’s tracks and see what they are doing and where they are headed. If they are leading their horses (unmounted) and riding their camels, they are heading for Makkah. But if they are riding their horses and leading their camels (unmounted), they are heading for Madinah. By the One in Whose Hand is my soul, if they are making for Madinah, I will march to them there and fight against them.”** `Ali went out to their tracks and found that they were riding their camels, leading their horses, and heading home to Makkah.

Inspecting the Killed and Attending to the Wounded

As soon as the Quraysh had departed the battlefield, the Muslims had their hands fully occupied with the killed and the wounded. The Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) sent Zaid ibn Thabit to look for Sa`d ibn Al-Rabi` and find out whether he was among the living or the dead. Zaid went to the battlefield in search of Sa`d. He found him lying at the point of death, with more than seventy wounds to his body. Zaid said to him, "O Sa`d, the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) sends you his greetings of peace and asks, 'How do you feel?'" Sa`d replied, "Convey my greetings of peace to the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) and tell him, 'O Messenger of Allah (PBBUH), I smell the scent of Paradise.' Tell my people from Al-Ansar, 'You have no excuse before Allah if the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) is reached (by the enemy) while you have an eye that blinks (i.e., you are still alive).'" Then he gasped his last breath and died.

The Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) went out by himself to search for the body of his paternal uncle Hamzah among the dead. He found him at the bottom of the valley with his stomach ripped open, his liver extracted, and his nose and ears cut off. The Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) began crying bitterly, great sobs heaving his chest, when he saw Hamzah's mutilated body.

Hamzah's sister, Safiyyah, came racing towards the battlefield when the news of her brother's death reached her. She approached to have a last look at Hamzah, showing acceptance of Allah's Will. She prayed the funeral prayer over him and said, "We all belong to Allah, and to Him we shall return," and asked Allah to forgive him.

Gathering and Burying the Martyrs' Bodies

Some of the Companions had collected their dead to take them to be buried in Madinah, but the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) ordered that they should be returned and buried on the battlefield where they were killed. He (PBBUH) also

ordered that they should be buried unwashed, in their bloodied clothes, after removing any armor or leather attire.

The Prophet (PBBUH) instructed his Companions to bury every two or three Muslims in one grave, and even shrouded two men in one cloth (when they lacked pieces of cloth with which to shroud the bodies of some martyrs).

Hamzah was buried with no shroud except a simple white striped mantle. It was so small that when pulled up to cover his head, it was too short to cover his feet; and when stretched down to his feet, his head became uncovered. So the Prophet (PBBUH) told the Companions to cover his head with the mantle and put some *Idhkkhir* (pleasant smelling grass) over his feet. Similar to Hamzah was Mus`ab ibn `Umair, nothing was found to wrap him in except a single garment with some grass placed to cover his feet.

The Prophet (PBBUH) would ask which of the two men to be buried together knew more of the Qur'an, and when one was pointed out, he (PBBUH) ordered that he be placed ahead of his Companion in the grave. He (PBBUH) supervised the burial of the martyrs until they were all laid in the earth. Looking at them, he (PBBUH) said, **“Verily, I am a witness for these (men). There is none wounded in Allah’s Cause but that on Resurrection Day, Allah will raise him with his wound bleeding, having the color of blood and the smell of musk.”**

Returning to Madinah

After the burial of the martyrs, the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) asked his Companions to arrange themselves in rows to offer praise and thanks to Allah. They aligned in rows behind him, and he (PBBUH) said words of humble thanks, praise, and supplication to Allah. With that, the Battle of Uhud ended, and the Muslims made their way back to Madinah.

On the way, the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) was met by Hamnah bint Jahsh, and he gave her the news of the death of her brother, `Abdullah ibn Jahsh.

She said, “We all belong to Allah, and to Him we shall return,” and begged Allah to forgive him. He (PBBUH) then gave her the news of the death of her maternal uncle, Hamzah ibn `Abdul-Muttalib, and her reaction was the same – restrained and patient – and she responded with the same words. When he (PBBUH) announced to her the death of her husband, Mus`ab ibn `Umair, Hamnah screamed and wailed. Seeing Hamnah’s loss of control over the loss of her husband compared to her restraint regarding her brother and uncle, the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) remarked, **“Indeed, a woman’s husband holds a special place with her.”**

While returning to Madinah from Uhud, the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) passed by a woman from Banu Dinar whose husband, brother, and father had all been killed in the battle. When she was informed of their death, she asked, “What about the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH)?” They replied, “He is fine, O mother of so and so. Thanks to Allah, he is as you would wish him to be.” “Show him to me that I may see him,” she said. He (PBBUH) was pointed out to her. When she saw him, she said, “Any calamity (one receives), after (other than) you, is insignificant.”

The Killed on Both Sides

The Battle of Uhud left behind seventy martyred Muslims, most of whom were from Al-Ansar. The number of the killed among the disbelievers was twenty-two, according to Ibn Ishaq; other historians speak of seventy-three.

Recapturing What Has Been Lost

The Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) spent this night in deep thought about the situation subsequent to Uhud, examining and analyzing it from different angles, and the different parties that were involved:

1. The non-Muslim community of Yathrib comprising the Jews, *Mushrikin*, and hypocrites, was overjoyed by what had happened at Uhud. The previously

stable and incontestable position and authority of the Muslims in Madinah was about to be undermined and destabilized; the thing they most craved.

2. Uhud was not the final word in the ongoing conflict between the Muslims and the *Mushrikin* in Makkah, but rather would expose them to further violence and abuse from the pagans of the Quraysh. After an event like this, they would only grow more emboldened to attack and vilify Allah's Religion.
3. While on their way back to Makkah, the Quraysh, on reassessing and considering their achievements in Uhud, could find them to be insubstantial. This realization could lead them to regret their return without securing a more solid victory, which, in turn, could shift them towards the decision of alerting their course back to Madinah to reattack it.

All these considerations required the Muslims to boldly seek to provoke a new confrontation with the enemy, as a remedial action to help mitigate the aftermath of Uhud, restore the morale of the Muslims, instill awe in the Jews and hypocrites of Madinah and show them they were not weakened by Uhud, and safeguard and consolidate the hard-won authority of the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) and his Companions within Madinah.

The Expedition of Hamra` Al-Asad

The very next morning of the Battle of Uhud, and despite his injuries, the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) ordered Bilal to call out to the Muslims to fight once again. Nobody, he (PBBUH) added, apart from those who participated in Uhud, should join this pursuit of the enemy.

Regardless of their injuries and fatigue, all the Companions answered the call and came out. They numbered about five hundred men, some with severe injuries. Everyone regrouped and marched on until they reached a place called Hamra' Al-Asad, about eight miles from Madinah, where they camped. The Prophet's (PBBUH) main purpose for this expedition was to impress upon the

enemy that the Muslims were still a force to be reckoned with and were ready to fight should the *Mushrikin* decide to return and attack Madinah.

The Prophet's (PBBUH) fears of the enemy's change of plans and possible return proved to be well founded. No sooner had the *Mushrikin* dismounted and encamped at Al-Rawha', thirty-six miles from Madinah, than they started reproaching one another. A group of them argued, "You achieved nothing. You broke down their force, then you left them! Some of their eminent leaders have remained and can gather men to fight you. Let us go back and completely annihilate them."

Despite being a risky undertaking, the majority of the *Mushrikin* approved of this stance. But it was rash and ill-considered, and Safwan ibn Umayyah, one of the more rational leaders among the Quraysh, objected. He tried to dissuade his people from embarking on such a venture, saying, "O my people. Do not do it! I fear that he gathers up all those who remained behind (did not join the Battle of Uhud). Return home as victors. Truly, I am not sure that the fight will not turn out badly for you (this time), if you go back to them." But his opinion was opposed by the great majority, and the majority's stance of returning to Madinah and destroying the Muslims became the decision.

Receiving Support from a Trusted Ally, Ma`bad Al-Khuza`i

While the Muslims were camping at Hamra' Al-Asad, a non-Muslim ally and well-wisher named Ma`bad ibn Abu Ma`bad Al-Khuza`i came by and conversed with the Prophet (PBBUH). He was from the Khuza`ah tribe whose people, both Muslims and pagans, became confidants of Prophet Muhammad (PBBUH) on the basis of a contract agreed upon between him and them.

Although still a *Mushrikin* (someone who worships Allah side by side with other gods), Ma`bad said, "O Muhammad, by Allah, we are deeply grieved by the losses you sustained from among your Companions. We wished that Allah might save them for you." The Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) asked Ma`bad to

proceed to where Abu Sufyan and his men were and discourage them from pursuing them.

Hamra' Al-Asad was not very far from Al-Rawha', where the *Mushrikin* had made camp. When Ma`bad arrived there and Abu Sufayn saw him, he said to him, "What news do you have, O Ma`bad?" Ma`bad replied, with an exaggerated tone of the danger awaiting them, "Muhammad has set out at the head of his Companions to pursue you with a massive host the like of which I have never seen. They are burning with revenge against you. All those who stayed behind on the day you fought (Uhud) now regret what they did and have joined him. They are filled with a fury against you the like of which I have never seen." Abu Sufayn said, "By Allah, we have decided to attack them again to exterminate those left."

"Do not do it. I advise you against this," said Ma`bad.

Collapse of the Will to Fight among the *Mushrikin*

Ma`bad's words completely impaired the will of the *Mushrikin* army. Panic replaced the resoluteness they had demonstrated just moments ago, as they recognized the validity of the apprehensions expressed by Safwan ibn Umayyah – the Muslims were gathering their full forces to resume the fighting against them and were full of vengeance and wrath. This was enough to dissuade Abu Sufyan and his men from their plans. Abu Sufyan at once gave orders to redirect their route to Makkah. But to save face and maintain prestige, and to scare off the Muslim army coming in pursuit of them, Abu Sufyan resorted to a ruse.

He sent a message to Muhammad (PBBUH) with some riders of `Abd Al-Qays, who were heading to Madinah in a caravan. The message was designed to intimidate them: We have resolved to march against you and your Companions to exterminate the rest of you.

As payment for delivering his message, Abu Sufyan promised the men of the caravan that he would load their mounts with raisins the next time they visited `Ukaz marketplace.

The Muslims were prepared to struggle on to the end. When the party of riders from `Abd Al-Qays arrived and conveyed Abu Sufyan's message to the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) at Hamra' Al-Asad, he (PBBUH) and his Companions just said, **“Allah is Sufficient for us, and He is the Best Disposer of Affairs.”**

Thus, Abu Sufyan's ploy to avoid the appearance of weakness did not work. He and his army were the ones retreating. His threat of a renewed attack on the Muslims only stiffened their resolve. The Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) remained with the Muslims in place, lighting fires for four successive nights to show the Quraysh that he (PBBUH) was steadfast in his determination, ready and waiting for their return. Conversely, the *Mushrikin* army's will to fight had disappeared. They preferred to preserve what they considered a victory and continued their journey back to Makkah.

When the Quraysh had departed and the danger had passed, the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) returned with his Companions to Madinah, their spirits elevated after regaining much of their status that could have been forever lost because of Uhud.

“By Allah's Mercy, You Dealt with Them Gently”

The Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) made a gracious return to Madinah, after having forced the *Mushrikin* of Makkah to withdraw and flee homeward and give up any intentions to attack Madinah. Nevertheless, there was a sense of bitterness and sorrow among the Muslims. A huge, burdensome guilt weighed especially on the archers, who had disobeyed the Prophet's (PBBUH) instructions, and the fighters who fled the battlefield.

Filled with remorse and shame, they came to see the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH), but he (PBBUH) received them smiling his habitual smile, and with his habitual magnanimity, he (PBBUH) forgave them all. He (PBBUH) dealt kindly with them and showed compassion and understanding towards common human weaknesses (namely, fear and self-interest), which some of them had acted on in the battle. His tolerant and merciful treatment greatly eased the keen sense of guilt they felt. The Noble Qur'an indicates this, saying: *“It was by Allah’s Mercy that you were lenient with them. And if you had been harsh and hard-hearted, they would have dispersed from around you. So pardon them, and ask forgiveness for them, and consult them in the matter.”* (Al-`Imran 3:159)

Was the Battle of Uhud a Defeat?

Achieving victory in a battle is dependent on meeting the criteria for victory. So, to answer this question, we must first establish the criteria for victory and defeat. For the Quraysh to be considered the victor, they must have inflicted the following losses on their opponents, the Muslims:

1. Fulfilling the objective for which the battle was fought; namely, killing the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) and annihilating the Muslim army.
2. Occupying the enemy’s territory.
3. Forcing the enemy to flee.
4. Gaining booty and taking captives from the enemy.
5. Remaining on the battlefield for several days after the end of the battle (as was the custom at the time for the victors; the Prophet (PBBUH) did this and stayed in Badr for three days following the battle).

Based on the aforementioned criteria for victory, an objective analysis of the Battle of Uhud would clearly reveal that the Quraysh did not achieve any of these conditions on the ground:

1. They neither killed the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) nor annihilated the

Muslim army.

2. They did not occupy the Muslims' camp or even reached their headquarters.
3. They did not force the whole Muslim army to flee the battlefield, despite the chaos and confusion that swept through the Muslims' ranks after becoming encircled. (The bulk of the Muslim army held their ground and fought hard to their deaths).
4. They did not take any booty or captives.
5. They did not remain on the battlefield for a single day after the end of the battle. Rather, they hurried to withdraw their troops and evacuate the battleground, even before the Muslims did. Even though Madinah, the Muslims' capital, was nearby and left vulnerable and unprotected, they did not dare to storm the city and plunder it.

All this confirms that Uhud was neither a victory for the Quraysh nor a defeat for the Muslims. It just provided an opportune chance for the Makkan idolaters to inflict heavy losses on the Muslims, without accomplishing their intended goals for fighting this war. The haste with which Abu Sufyan and his troops withdrew and left the battlefield proves this. Abu Sufyan saw the risk of a new round of confrontations, as was apparent in his position in the Expedition of Hamra' Al-Asad. He was unwilling to face the prospect of disgrace and defeat should the fighting have carried on and escalated. It could have quickly turned against them.

Hamra' Al-Asad was inseparable from Uhud; both should be viewed as one war. Over its course, both sides had their portions of success and defeat. The Noble Qur'an indicates this, saying: "Do not falter in the pursuit of the enemy; if you are suffering (hardships), they too are suffering. But you hope to receive from Allah what they can never hope for. And Allah is All-Knowing, All-Wise." (Al-Nisa' 4:104)

The previous noble Qur'anic verse regards both sides as identical in terms of hardships and inflicting losses on the other side, from which it can be inferred that both armies concluded the battle and went back neither victorious nor vanquished.

Lessons Imprinted by Uhud to Be Remembered for a Lifetime

With the great adversity faced in the Battle of Uhud came great wisdom and enlightenment from Allah (Exalted be He). Also, the deeper identities of people were either forged or exposed. Some of Uhud's hard-learned lessons and benefits included:

1. **Teaching through collectively experiencing the negative consequences of disobedience**, as happened when the archers abandoned the positions assigned to them by Prophet Muhammad (PBBUH), against his strict orders not to leave them under any circumstances.
2. **The Prophet (PBBUH) suffering and going through trials**, as was usual with the previous prophets, who all passed through different adversities and challenges. Part of the wisdom behind this was that if the Muslims went into battle and came out victorious all the time, many pretenders of the faith would infiltrate their groups, and the clear black and white lines of who was true and who was false would be blurred. Conversely, if they were defeated all the time, the mission of Islam would never be accomplished.
3. **Exposing to the believers the reality of the hypocrites**. Before the Battle of Uhud, the hypocrites were inconspicuous and lived among the Muslims as members of their faith. Uhud showed their true character, and the Muslims realized they had enemies in their own land – bitter enemies who might want them dead. From then on, Muslims exercised caution.
4. **Sometimes, certain situations require a deferment of victory** as a means to subdue the soul's pride and remove self-conceit (that hinders acting for Allah's Sake alone). Believers show patience with the delay, whereas

hypocrites show exasperation.

5. **Attaining the highest abodes in Paradise through martyrdom**, which could not be otherwise attained – or could not be attained without an expensive sacrifice. People’s deeds alone may fall short of reaching such high ranks and occupying the most honorable abodes. Allah (Glorified be He) makes them attainable to His servants when they endure and persevere through the intense struggles and adversities that He (Glorified be He) sends their way.
6. **Destroying Allah’s enemies when they had deservedly earned their destruction** because of their disbelief and tyrannical oppression of the believers.
7. **Binding the Muslims to the creed of Islam, rather than to the person of Messenger Muhammad (PBBUH)**. Commenting on the Battle of Uhud, Allah (Exalted be He) says: “Muhammad is no more than a Messenger, and indeed (many) Messengers have passed away before him. If he dies or is killed, will you then turn back on your heels (as disbelievers)? And he who turns back on his heels, not the least harm will he do to Allah, and Allah will give reward to those who are grateful.” (Al-`Imran 3:144)

Events that Intervened Between the Two Battles of Uhud and Al-Ahzab (4 A.H.)

Abu Sufayn returned to Makkah elated and rejoicing at having erased the humiliation of defeat the Quraysh had faced in Badr. That exultation was the general feeling among the *Mushrikin* of the Quraysh. After their return to Madinah, the Muslims were rebuffed by many of their fellows. This was despite their perseverance in the open for four whole days, waiting for their enemy to come and face them. But the Quraysh did not dare to pursue them and risk an engagement.

Now, following the Battle of Uhud, the extent to which the situation had become threatening was clear to the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH), not only inside but beyond Madinah. Real direct dangers presented by the various surrounding Arab tribes. Non-Muslim tribes regained some confidence after Uhud that made them consider opposing the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) and annihilating the Muslims, even though only a few days earlier these tribes had treated the Muslims as a power to be respected and feared in the area.

Therefore, the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) was careful to keep himself abreast of the latest developments inside and outside Madinah. He (PBBUH) had scouts gathering intelligence everywhere, in expectation of further attacks, while remaining prepared and determined to reclaim the place of the Muslims in the region and reestablish their authority and dignity. This unstable period involved conducting *Ghazawat* (expeditions) and dispatching *Saraya* (squadrons), including the following two:

1. The *Sariyya* (Squadron) Led by Abu Salamah ibn `Abdul-Asad

An urgent warning was sent to the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) two months after the Battle of Uhud. The warning informed him that Tulaihah and

Salamah, the two sons of Khuwailid and two chieftains of Banu Asad, were inciting their tribesmen to attack Madinah and wage war against the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH). They were emboldened to make this move by the assumption that the Battle of Uhud had significantly undermined the readiness and combat power of the Muslims.

A squadron of one hundred and fifty men led by Abu Salamah ibn `Abdul-Asad Al-Makhzumi was immediately dispatched in response. The Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) gave them directions to hide during the day and move at night using untrodden paths, in order to march undetected and surprise the enemy. Abu Salamah did as the Prophet (PBBUH) commanded and showed up by surprise in Banu Asad's territory during the darkness of predawn. Thrown into utter confusion by this unexpected pre-emptive raid, the men of Banu Asad were unable to assemble their forces against the Muslims. Rather, they were entirely scattered and fled, leaving behind their cattle, which the Muslims took as spoils.

No fighting took place and Abu Salamah's squadron returned safely to Madinah, having successfully achieved the aim of their mission and reclaimed a portion of the reputation which the Muslims held among their neighbors.

Abu Salamah died shortly after this expedition due to an injury he sustained in the Battle of Uhud.

2. The Mission Executed by `Abdullah ibn Unais

A few days after this incident, news arrived about an upcoming attack being planned by Khalid ibn Sufyan Al-Hudhaili, the chief of the Banu Lahyan branch of the Hudhail tribe. He was mobilizing his tribesmen and inciting other Arabs to attack the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH).

In order to address this threat, the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) assigned `Abdullah ibn Unais to a one-person expedition to put an end to the danger posed by Khalid. `Abdullah went forth until he reached Khalid, who asked him

who he was. `Abdullah ibn Unais replied, “A man from Khuza`ah. I have heard that you are gathering (forces) against Muhammad, and I have come to be with you.”

Khalid did not hide the fact that he was amassing an army to raid Madinah, and he allowed `Abdullah to join him. `Abdullah gained his trust, and once he was able to draw Khalid aside and converse with him privately, at a distance from his men, he smote him dead with his sword. `Abdullah ibn Unais traveled back to Madinah and told the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) that he had accomplished his appointed mission. There was no action from the other side. The threat of the imminent attack subsided with the death of the Hudhaili chieftain, and the issue stopped there.

The Quraysh Offering Prizes to Anyone Who Seizes Muslims

The Quraysh had made it their purpose to avenge the killings of their chiefs and dignitaries at the Battles of Badr and Uhud. This was an end for which they offered grand rewards to whoever would hand over to them any Muslims involved.

The news spread, and surrounding tribes seriously took up the offer and began tracking information about the men whom the Quraysh wanted. Any of them who left Madinah on a trading journey, or for some other errand, became a target of these tribe members. They would pursue them with the intention of capturing and selling them as prisoners in Makkah and receiving the reward. The Quraysh also resorted to rallying some tribes to their side, and using them to deceive the Muslims into coming to Makkah, then taking revenge upon them. The following were two of the most dishonest conspiracies perpetrated against the Muslims:

First: The Tragic Event of Al-Raji`

Around that same time, in the month of Safar 4 A.H., a delegation from the tribes of `Adal and Al-Qarah came to meet the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) in Madinah. They claimed the growing presence of Islam among their people and asked him to send with them some of his Companions as teachers to teach them the Qur'an and instruct them about Islam. The Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) sent with them six of his prominent Companions (according to another version, he sent ten).

The six Muslim men, entrusted with the task of teaching the tenets of Islam, set out with the group of tribesmen. They made it as far as a watering place called Al-Raji`, which was situated on the way to Hejaz and belonged to the tribe of Hudhail. Upon reaching that spot, the delegation of `Adal and Al-Qarah betrayed them to the people of Hudhail, whose chieftain, Khalid ibn Sufyan Al-Hudhaili, was killed by `Abdullah ibn Unais. Nearly one hundred archers from the Lahyan clan of the Hudhail tribe promptly responded and rushed in pursuit of the six Muslim men, who were forced to seek protection on a nearby hill.

The six Muslim men were thus besieged by archers from all directions on top of the hill. They drew their swords and stood prepared for the battle that would soon commence. The tribesmen from Lahyan clan, encircling them, called upon them to come down and surrender, assuring them that they had no intention of harming them. They said, "By Allah, we do not intend to kill you, but just to sell you to the Makkans and get some payment in return. We give you Allah's Promise and Covenant that we shall not kill you." As was previously mentioned, they were very covetous of the reward for seeking out and handing over the persons wanted by the Quraysh

The Muslims rejected the offer of the Lahyan clan. Although they were flanked and outnumbered about twenty to one, they refused to come down and began to fight until three of them were killed. The remaining three, namely Khubayb ibn `Adi, Zaid ibn Al-Dathinah, and `Abdullah ibn Tariq, were again

offered a guarantee of safety by the Lahyan clan. This time they accepted and descended the hill.

Killing `Abdullah and Selling Zaid and Khubayb

When the remaining three Muslims descended, the men of the Lahyan clan acted treacherously. The moment the Muslims came into their grasp, they tied them fast with the strings of their bows. `Abdullah ibn Tariq protested that this was treachery and lost faith in their promise. He refused to go with his captors and, managing to unbind himself, took hold of his sword and resisted their attempts to forcibly drag him to accompany them, but he was overwhelmed and killed.

The men of Banu Lahyan then proceeded to Makkah with the two remaining captives, Khubayb and Zaid, where they sold them to the Quraysh – specifically to the revenge-seeking relatives among them. Zaid was purchased by Safwan bin Umayyah, who killed him in retaliation for the death of his father, Umayyah ibn Khalaf, at Badr. Khubayb was purchased by the children of Al-Harith ibn `Amir ibn Nawfal, who killed him in retaliation for their father, Al-Harith, who was killed by him at Uhud.

The Execution of Zaid and Khubayb

Safwan sent his prisoner Zaid with his freedman Nistas to Al-Tan`im, to be killed outside the Sanctuary. A group of the Quraysh gathered to witness his death. Abu Sufyan ibn Harb was one of them. He said to Zaid, when he was brought forward to be killed, “I adjure you by Allah, O Zaid (to tell me)! Would you not wish that Muhammad was with us now in your place, so that we might cut off his head, and that you were (safe) among your family (in Madinah)?”

Zaid replied, “By Allah, I would not wish that Muhammad, wherever he (PBBUH) is now, be hurt with even so much as a thorn prick, and (in return) I am (safe) among my family.”

Abu Sufyan remarked, "I have never seen among people anyone loving someone as much as the Companions of Muhammad love Muhammad." Nistas then stepped up and killed him.

As for Khubayb, he was imprisoned for some time until it was unanimously decided that he should be killed by crucifixion. He was taken out of the Sacred Sanctuary to Al-Tan'im for the execution. When he was brought to be crucified, he asked to be allowed to offer a two-*Rak'ah* (unit) prayer. They allowed him to do so, and upon finishing his prayer, he looked up and said to them, "By Allah, were I not afraid that you would think that I am prolonging my prayer for fear of death, I would have prayed more." [Khubayb was thus the first Muslim to establish the practice of praying two *Rak'ahs* before being executed.]

Khubayb was bound on a long piece of wood, fixed by deep digging – for the Quraysh wanted him to be seen and talked about by comers and goers. They did not immediately kill him, but rather slowly and painfully killed him. A vast throng crowded about him; among them were many slaves, and also some women and children. They were ordered to pelt him with stones.

When Khubayb was lifted and hung on the piece of wood, he looked angrily at them and invoked Allah, saying, "O Allah, count their numbers, and kill them one by one, and leave none of them remaining." There was such a strength in his voice that the people were seized with panic and threw themselves to the ground out of fear that his curse would strike them.

During this torment, the *Mushrikin* urged Khubayb to abandon his faith to get freed by them. "Give up Islam and we shall release you," they said. Khubayb replied, "No, by Allah, I would not like to abandon Islam, even if the possession of the entire world (all of its wealth, pleasure, and glory) was given to me."

Abu Sufyan then asked him the same question he had asked Zaid, "Do you not wish that Muhammad was in your place, and you instead resting safely at your home?"

Khubayb replied, “No, by Allah, I would not even wish that a small thorn hurt Muhammad (PBBUH), while I am resting safely at my home.’

Khubayb then made a final wish on the piece of wood on which he was crucified. He said, “O Allah, I only see in front of me an enemy’s face. O Allah, there is no one here to convey my greeting of peace to Your Messenger (PBBUH). O Allah, I ask You to convey it to him on my behalf.” [Khubayb’s request was granted; his greeting was carried by Angel Jibril to the Prophet (PBBUH)].¹

Finally, they stabbed Khubayb to death with a spear.

Second: A More Tragic Event Known as Ma`unah Well

Only days after Al-Raji tragedy, and during the same month (Safar 4 A.H.), another greater and more horrible event took place as part of the continuous agitation and conspiracies of the *Mushrikin* designed to weaken Islam and harm Muslims.

The head chief of Banu `Amir, Abu Bara’ `Amir ibn Malik ibn Ja`far, nicknamed “the Player with Spears,” came to Madinah to see the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH), who then invited him to Islam. Abu Bara’ neither accepted nor declined the Prophet’s (PBBUH) invitation. Instead, he said, “O Muhammad, this matter of yours to which you are calling (people) is good and beautiful. If you were to dispatch some of your Companions to the people of Najd (i.e., his people) to call them to your religion, I would hope that they would respond to you.”

The Prophet (PBBUH) expressed his fear of his Companions being betrayed by the people of Najd [as had befallen Khubayb and his Companions at the hands of the tribe of Hudhail]. So, at first, he (PBBUH) rejected the offer, but was eventually persuaded into sending some of his Companions to Najd after the

¹ The version reported by Ibn Kathir mentioned that when Khubayb was tied and lifted onto the piece of wood, he said, “O Allah, we have conveyed the message of Your Messenger (PBUH), so convey to him this morning what is being done to us.”

leader of Banu `Amir said that he would take them under his own formal protection. "I shall guarantee their protection, so send them to call people to your religion," said Abu Bara', who was sincere in his offer and harbored no ill will. He was a man of such strong influence among his people that those to whom he extended his formal protection had no reason to fear assaults.

With this assurance, the Prophet (PBBUH) sent Al-Mundhir ibn `Amr at the head of seventy men from among his Companions to invite the people of Najd to Islam. These seventy Muslims were especially prominent as pious, devoted Qur'an reciters. On their way to Najd, their days were spent gathering and selling firewood to buy food for the people of *Suffah* (a roofed section in the Prophet's Mosque where the homeless and strangers were accommodated), while their nights were spent praying. They did this the whole way until they arrived at Ma`unah Well, on a land in between the territory of Banu `Amir and a rocky patch of clan ground belonging to Banu Sulaim.

After halting and camping at Ma`unah Well, they sent Haram ibn Milhan to `Amir ibn Al-Tufayl (who was the nephew of Abu Bara' and also held a position of leadership in the tribe) with a letter from the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH). When Haram arrived, `Amir did not even bother to read the letter. He ordered a man to kill Haram ibn Milhan with a spear in the back.

Directly after this, `Amir called on the tribe of Banu `Amir to aid him in killing the rest of the seventy Muslims, but they refused to violate the pledge of protection given to them by Abu Bara'. He then turned to Banu Sulaim for assistance, and they responded to his request. They promptly and completely encircled the Muslim men camping at Ma`unah Well. Seeing them all around them, hemming them in on all sides, the seventy Companions took up their swords. They stood their ground and fought valiantly until they were killed to the last man.

Only two men survived the massacre. The first was Ka`b ibn Zaid ibn Al-Najjar, who lay wounded among the dead and was left for being thought killed.

He escaped and returned to Madinah [and was later martyred in the Battle of Al-Khandaq (Trench)]. The other survivor was `Amr ibn Umayyah Al-Damri, who was away from the camp, grazing the Muslims' camels at the time of the attack. Alarmed by the birds hovering over their camping spot, he headed back. He was taken captive upon arriving at the scene. When `Amir ibn Al-Tufayl learned that he was from the Mudar tribe, he released him, claiming that he did so in fulfillment of a vow made by his mother to emancipate a slave.

After being released, `Amr ibn Umayyah Al-Damri was heading back to Madinah when he came across two men from Banu `Amir whom he mistook for part of the group of men who had massacred his companions. The two men stopped next to him in the shade where he was resting. `Amr waited until they slept and killed them both. He thought that by doing so he would avenge some of his killed companions. He did not know that the two men had with them a guarantee of protection from the Prophet (PBBUH). As a result, their blood-money became a debt due from the Prophet (PBBUH) to their relatives.

The Prophet (PBBUH) Grieves over His Companions' Deaths at Al-Raji` and Ma`unah Well

`Amr ibn Umayyah Al-Damri and Ka`b ibn Zaid arrived to the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) with the tragic news of what had happened. Seventy of his Companions had been killed at one time at Ma`unah Well, after seven others were betrayed and killed near Al-Raji`. These two tragic incidents deeply affected the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH). His solace was invoking Allah's Punishment upon their killers. Every dawn prayer, for thirty successive days, he (PBBUH) supplicated Allah against those who had betrayed and killed his Companions.

Paying the Blood Money of the Two Men of Banu `Amir Wrongly Killed

`Amr ibn Umayyah Al-Damri told the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) what he had done to the two men from Banu `Amir whom he had come across, and he (PBBUH) responded by saying, **“You have killed two men for whom I shall have to pay blood money.”**

Redressing `Amr’s mistake for killing two men protected by a pact of protection and raising the bloody money to be paid to the families of the deceased became a priority for the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH). He (PBBUH) began to raise the due amount from the Muslims and their allies, the Jews, pursuant to the terms of the Constitution of Madinah agreement between the Jews and the Muslims of Madinah; that each party would assist the other paying due blood money.

To that purpose, the Prophet (PBBUH) went to Banu Al-Nadir, along with some of his Companions, to ask them to contribute to the necessary blood money.

What took place during this visit formed the starting point of the events leading up to a military movement undertaken against Banu Al-Nadir, and their subsequent expulsion.

Expedition Against Banu Al-Nadir

Part of the Constitutional Covenant the Prophet (PBBUH) made with the Jews of Madinah upon his arrival in the city was a clause that imposed on all parties of the treaty an obligation of mutual support, cooperation, and loyalty without treachery.

Banu `Amir were joined by a treaty and an alliance with the Jews of Banu Al-Nadir. The Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) had entered into a pledge of protection with them, and this piece of information was unknown to `Amr ibn Umayyah. He killed two men of the Banu Kilab clan that formed part of the larger tribe of Banu `Amir (to which `Amir ibn al-Tufayl belonged) when he mistook them as part of the hosts of `Amir ibn al-Tufayl, who massacred his fellows at Ma`unah Well.

The Prophet (PBBUH) assumed responsibility for payment of the blood money of the two men from the Banu Kilab clan of Banu `Amir and started collecting it. He (PBBUH) went to the district inhabited by the Banu Al-Nadir tribe, located close to Quba', to request that Banu Al-Nadir contribute to the blood money, in conformity with the treaty concluded between them (Muslims and Jews), according to which mutual assistance would be granted towards paying off blood money.

During this visit to Banu Al-Nadir, the Prophet (PBBUH) was accompanied by a group of his Companions, including Abu Bakr, `Umar, and `Ali.

Banu Al-Nadir Conspires to Assassinate the Prophet (PBBUH)

At first, when the Prophet (PBBUH) explained to the leaders of Banu Al-Nadir the reason for his visit and asked them to contribute to the blood money for the two members of Banu `Amir, they displayed artificial cordiality and

approval, and responded with, “We shall do so, O Abul-Qasim¹. Sit over here until we fulfill your request.” The Prophet (PBBUH) took a seat with his Companions against one of the walls of their houses and waited for them to fulfill their promise.

The Jews of Banu Al-Nadir withdrew and began to consult secretly with one another. They said, “You will never get this man (meaning the Prophet PBBUH) in such close proximity again. Who is the man who will ascend atop this house and drop this rock on him to rid us of him?” `Amr ibn Jahsh ibn Ka`b said, “I am the one to do this (deed)!” Salam ibn Mishkam, one of the rabbis of Banu Al-Nadir, strongly objected and cautioned them against such an action, saying, “Do not do it! By Allah, he will surely be informed of what you intend to do. It would be a breach of the treaty that is between us and him.” But his advice went unheeded. `Amr ibn Jahsh ibn Ka`b went up to the roof to drop the rock on the Prophet’s (PBBUH) head, as they had agreed.

The Prophet (PBBUH) is Saved Through Allah’s Protection

As the Prophet (PBBUH) sat waiting with his Companions for the leaders of Banu Al-Nadir to come back with the share of the money they had promised, Angel Jibril (PBUH) descended, by Allah’s Command, to reveal to him their plot. The Prophet (PBBUH) quickly got up from his seat, giving the impression that he had some task to attend to, and went back to Madinah, where he was soon joined by his Companions. There he told his Companions about the treacherous plan of the Jews of Banu Al-Nadir to assassinate him.

Consequences of Treason and Breach of the Agreement

Treason and disloyalty, combined with rashness, produce the worst consequences. A country might be living peacefully, directing its affairs

¹ The Father of Qasim; the Prophet’s Epithet after the name of his deceased eldest son Qasim, who died before his second birthday.

prosperously, until a group of its leaders decide upon – and perpetrate – an act of treachery in order to realize an imagined success and dominance. But contrarily, it inflicts evil upon them and turns them out of their homes, as happened to the Jews of Banu Al-Nadir.

Upon discovering the treacherous plan to assassinate him designed by the Jews of Banu Al-Nadir, the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) sent Muhammad ibn Maslamah to them with the following message: **“Leave Madinah and do not inhabit it with me. You have breached the covenant I made with you by the treacherous act you planned against me. I give you a respite of ten days (to leave Madinah). Any of you seen here (after the expiration of the ten-day respite) will have his head struck off.”**

After receiving the ultimatum, the Jews of Banu Al-Nadir were left with no alternative but to evacuate Madinah, and they spent the following days preparing for their departure.

‘Abdullah ibn Ubai ibn Salul Incites Banu Al-Nadir to Defy the Prophet’s Order

While that was the situation the Jews of Banu Al-Nadir were in, they received a message from the chief of the hypocrites at Madinah, ‘Abdullah ibn Ubai ibn Salul (also abbreviated as Ibn Salul), telling them to stand firm, refuse to leave, and remain firmly entrenched in their strongholds.

Ibn Salul promised them the support of two thousand warriors from his own followers and the Arabs allied to him, who were ready to enter their fortifications and die defending them. He assured them that he and his men were willing to fight alongside them or leave Madinah with them if they were forced to leave.

The fake, dishonest position taken by the Madinese hypocrites towards the Jews of Banu Al-Nadir was related by Allah in the Qur’an, in the Chapter of Al-Hashr (The Gathering): **“Have you (O Muhammad) not observed the hypocrites**

who say to their fellows who have disbelieved among the People of the Scripture, ‘(By Allah) if you are expelled, we (too) indeed will go out with you, and we shall never obey anyone against you, and if you are attacked (in fight), we shall indeed help you.’ But Allah bears Witness that they verily are liars.” (Al-Hashr 59:11)

The Jews of Banu Al-Nadir were influenced by Ibn Salul’s words and began to reconsider their decision. They deliberated and negotiated among themselves whether or not to depend on the support guaranteed by Ibn Salul. Some of them did not consider him to be reliable, as he had previously deserted and failed the Jews of Banu Qaynuqa`.

They also could not expect aid from the Jews of Banu Qurayzah, who chose to keep their pact with the Prophet (PBBUH). Yet, prominent leaders of Banu Al-Nadir were encouraged and emboldened by Ibn Salul’s words, and they finally resolved to resist and not leave the city.

Acting upon the decision arrived at, Huyai ibn Akhtab, the chieftain of Banu Al-Nadir, sent a message to the Prophet (PBBUH) to inform him thus, “We shall not leave our homes. Do what you will.”

The Jews of Banu Al-Nadir, equipped with ample supplies, barricaded themselves in their strongholds. The ten-day limit passed, and none of the people of Banu Al-Nadir departed from their homes.

The Siege of Banu Al-Nadir

When the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) received Huyai ibn Akhtab’s reply, he (PBBUH) rose to confront the situation. He (PBBUH) entrusted the affairs of Madinah to Ibn Umm Maktum and marched with his Companions to the territory of Banu Al-Nadir. `Ali ibn Abu Talib carried the army’s flag.

The Jews of Banu Al-Nadir restricted themselves to the tactic of fortifying themselves inside their strongholds and avoided engaging with the Muslim army. As a result, the Prophet (PBBUH) and his army laid siege to them.

Banu Al-Nadir, from the ramparts of their strongholds, started shooting arrows and pelting stones at the Muslims, taking strategic advantage of the thick fields of date palms around them, which provided a shield that acted as a protective zone.

As a countermeasure, the Prophet (PBBUH) ordered that some of these palm trees be cut down and burned to bring the enemy into submission. In this regard, Almighty Allah revealed the Qur'anic verse: "Whatever you have cut down of (the enemy's) palm trees or left standing on their trunks (intact), it was by Allah's Leave, so that He might disgrace the rebellious." (Al-Hashr 59:5)

Ibn Salaul Turns His Back on Banu Al-Nadir and Their Eventual Surrender

The Jews of Banu Al-Nadir kept waiting for the aid of Ibn Salul, or their Arab allies from the Ghatafan tribe, but eventually realized that it was in vain. After six days of holding out, they despaired of receiving any support from Ibn Salul or reinforcements from Banu Qurayzah or other Jewish tribes.

Allah (Exalted be He) then cast terror into their hearts that brought about their defeat, and the six-day siege quickly came to its conclusion by the Jews of Banu Al-Nadir expressing their readiness to lay down their arms, surrender, and comply with the Prophet's (PBBUH) order to leave Madinah, on condition of the safety of their lives and property.

The Prophet (PBBUH) consented to their terms of peace and allowed them to depart Madinah with as many of their belongings as their camels could carry, except for armor and weapons.

Banu Al-Nadir Apply a Scorched-Earth Policy to Their Property

The people of Banu Al-Nadir commenced performing their part of the agreement, but they went to extremes and adopted what we today call a “scorched-earth policy.” They demolished their homes to render them uninhabitable for the Muslims and loaded everything they could take away on the backs of their camels – even doors, windows, pegs, and ceiling beams.

Allah (the Most Exalted) refers to this event in His Statement: “It is He Who drove out the disbelievers among the people of the Scripture (i.e., the Jews of Banu Al-Nadir) from their homes at the first gathering (i.e., banishment). You did not think that they would leave, and they thought that their fortresses would protect them from Allah! But Allah (Allah’s Decree) came to them from where they had not expected, and He cast terror into their hearts, so that they destroyed their own dwellings with their own hands and the hands of the believers. So take admonition, O you with eyes (to see).” (Al-Hashr 59:2)

Having packed their belongings and wealth, the Jews of Banu Al-Nadir started their departure from Madinah disgraced (defeated, not through battle, but by fear). Most of them headed to settle with the Jewish community of Khaybar (an oasis to the north of Madinah), while a small group migrated to Adhri`at in Syria.

Among their prominent chiefs who chose to go to Khaybar were Huyai ibn Akhtab and Salam ibn Abu Al-Huqaiq. Only two men from Banu Al-Nadir embraced Islam. They were Yamin ibn `Amr and Abu Sa`d ibn Wahb, and they retained their personal property.

The Spoils Obtained from Banu Al-Nadir

Despite the destruction which Banu Al-Nadir inflicted upon their own houses, they left behind large spoils, mainly in the form of property, crops, and weapons; around fifty armors, fifty helmets, and three-hundred-and-forty swords.

Unlike previous times, these spoils were not gained through fighting, but through a peace agreement with Banu Al-Nadir that put an end to the conflict. Therefore, by a grant from Allah, they were transferred to the exclusive ownership of the Prophet (PBBUH) to distribute according to his own discretion, as dictated in Allah's Saying regarding the spoils of war gained through peaceful means rather than fighting:

“And that which Allah granted as spoils (*Fai*) to His Messenger (Muhammad) from them, for which you made no expedition with either cavalry or camelry. But Allah gives power to His Messengers over whomsoever He wills. And Allah is Able to do all things. Whatever Allah granted as spoils to His Messenger (out of the property) of the people of the towns belongs to Allah, and His Messenger, and the near of kin, the orphans, the needy, and the (stranded) traveler, so that it will not circulate only among the hands of the rich ones among you (i.e., to prevent wealth from remaining restricted among the rich and the upper classes). And whatever the Messenger (Muhammad) gives you, take; and whatever he forbids you, refrain from. And fear Allah; indeed, Allah is Severe in punishment.” (Al-Hashr 59:6-7)

The Messenger of Allah (PBBUH), after consultation with and consent from Al-Ansar, distributed the spoils gained from Banu Al-Nadir among Al-Muhajirun (emigrants from Makkah) only. These people had left their homes and properties behind and come to Madinah, and thus moved from a position of self-sufficiency and financial independence to one of destitution and financial dependence on Al-Ansar, who welcomed them to stay in their homes and shared their wealth with them. This method of distribution would alleviate the burden of Al-Ansar and bring back Al-Muhajirun to self-sufficiency.

Abu Dujanah and Sahl ibn Hunaif were two poor members of Al-Ansar, and with that in mind, the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) made an exception and gave them each a share of the spoils. The Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) also allocated a portion to sustain his family, his kindred, the orphans, the needy, and the wayfarers.

The expedition against Banu Al-Nadir took place in Rabi` Al-Awwal, 4 A.H., on which occasion Allah (Glorified be He) revealed the entire Qur'anic Chapter of Al-Hashr (59). Its themes discuss the expulsion of Banu Al-Nadir, expose the corrupt inner workings of the hypocrites, clarify the legal rulings pertaining to spoils of war gained without fighting, and praise the lofty striving and goodwill of Al-Muhajirun and Al-Ansar.

This Qur'anic Chapter also shows the legitimacy of pulling down and burning trees or structures in the enemy's territory for an imperative military necessity for which there is no alternative. Destruction of any part of the natural environment or private property is prohibited by Islam, unless it is of indispensable military necessity, in which case it is not considered corruption of the land.

At the conclusion of the Qur'anic Chapter of Al-Hashr, Allah advises the believers to observe piety and be prepared for the Hereafter, and He (Glorified be He) ends it with extolling Himself and mentioning some of His Magnificent Names and Lofty Attributes.

For this reason, `Abdullah ibn `Abbas used to call Chapter Al-Hashr "the Chapter of Banu Al-Nadir."

The Scribe of the Prophet's (PBBUH) Letters

Up until the expulsion of the Jews of Banu Al-Nadir from Madinah, the scribe charged with the mission of writing down the Prophet's (PBBUH) letters was a Jewish man. This made it possible to send as many letters in Hebrew and Aramaic as the Prophet (PBBUH) needed. This was a measure of how much trust

he (PBBUH) put in them, and the character of the peaceful coexistence that he (PBBUH) wanted to prevail between different communities.

After the Prophet (PBBUH) sentenced the Jews of Banu Al-Nadir to expulsion because of their disloyalty and treason, he (PBBUH) could no longer trust a non-Muslim to write his letters. Therefore, he (PBBUH) commanded Zaid ibn Thabit to learn these two languages and appointed him as his scribe.

It is worth noting that Zaid ibn Thabit was given the task of collecting the Qur'an in one manuscript during the Caliphate of Abu Bakr.

The Expedition of Dhat Al-Riqa`

In the Year 4 A.H. During the Month of Rabi` Al-Akhar

Following the expedition against Banu Al-Nadir, the authority of the Muslims in Madinah moved back into a solid position. For the month of Rabi` Al-Awwal, the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) stayed in Madinah until his intelligence scouts, who were closely monitoring the movements of the surrounding tribes, reported a rallying of forces among Banu Muharib and Banu Tha`labah of the Ghatafan tribe, in Najd, to wage war against him.

The Prophet (PBBUH) decided to surprise the hostile forces in their territory before they could complete their preparations. He (PBBUH) appointed Abu Dhar (according to another version, `Uthman ibn `Affan) in charge of Madinah during his absence and proceeded towards Najd at the head of four hundred men. When the people of Banu Muharib and Banu Tha`labah saw him advancing, prepared to do battle, all their tribesmen fled in panic to the mountaintops nearby, leaving behind their women, children, and wealth.

A group of them then assembled and were ready to fight; however, although both sides approached each other, no fighting took place between them. At that time, the `Asr (Afternoon) Prayer became due. Fearing the enemy would launch a surprise attack on the Muslims while they were engaged in prayer, the Prophet (PBBUH) led his Companions in the Fear Prayer, which was prescribed by Allah (Exalted be He) on this occasion.

According to the method of this prayer, the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) divided his Companions into two groups: one group stood guard, facing the enemy, while the second group prayed two *Rak`abs* (units of prayer) with the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH). Then the two groups exchanged positions, and the first group, who were on guard and had not yet prayed, came and prayed two *Rak`abs* led by the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH).

Almighty Allah then cast terror into the hearts of the enemy, and their troops scattered over the area, fleeing from any confrontation or serious fight. The vanquishment achieved at Dhat Al-Riqā` had a terrifying impact on these raiding tribes and other threatening adversaries. After fifteen days, the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) and his Companions returned to Madinah, having reestablished the status of the Muslims as a recognized power in the region. It was narrated that this expedition was called *Dhat Al-Riqā`* (literally, rag-covered) because, during it, the Muslims wrapped their feet with rags to alleviate the injuries they sustained due to walking on the hot rugged desert terrain.

The Appointment at Badr

Before departing from the battleground of Uhud, Abu Sufyan shouted out a challenge to the Muslims of another encounter next year at the same place. “Your meeting place is Badr next year,” he said.

Thus, the time and place for a decisive battle between the two sides was settled. Badr was the site of one of the seasonal Arab pre-Islamic gatherings, where an eight-day market was held every year during the month of Sha`ban.

After the return of the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) from Dhat Al-Riqa`, he (PBBUH) stayed in Madinah for the months of Jumada Al-Awwal, Jumada Al-Akhirah, and Rajab. With the arrival of Sha`ban came the appointed time for the second meeting at Badr.

Although it was the leaders of the Quraysh who had made the challenge to meet at Badr in a year’s time for a second decisive battle, they began seeking to discourage the Muslims from showing up at the time and place agreed upon, so that the Muslims would be the ones renegeing on the arrangement.

To that end, Abu Sufyan hired a man called Nu`aym ibn Mas`ud Al-Ashja`i. He had come to Makkah to perform `Umrah (minor pilgrimage). Abu Sufyan promised him ten camels in return for going to Madinah and scaring the Muslims out of fighting by exaggerating the size of the Makkan forces. However, Nu`aym’s talk about the large forces prepared by Abu Sufyan to overwhelm the Muslims did not affect their resolve.

With a force consisting of fifteen hundred men, including ten mounted cavalymen, the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) marched out towards Badr, leaving `Abdullah ibn `Abdullah ibn Ubai (according to another version, `Abdullah ibn Rawahah) in charge of Madinah.

The Muslim army arrived at Badr but found not a trace of the *Mushrikin* fighters. They made camp there, waiting for the Quraysh's army to appear on the battlefield.

Abu Sufyan had managed to mobilize an army consisting of two thousand fighters and fifty horsemen. After two days of marching from Makkah, they reached Mar Al-Zahran region, where they halted and established their camp near the water spring of Mijannah (about forty miles from Makkah). According to sources on the ground, Abu Sufyan learned about the size of the Muslim force; that it was a little smaller than his own army, but undoubtedly possessed of greater bravery, as he well knew the Muslims to have.

Abu Sufyan's resolve weakened, and he decided to back out of the fight, devising a pretext by which he might circumvent the situation. He said to his companions, "O people of the Quraysh, nothing will improve the condition you are in but a fruitful year — a year during which your animals graze on bushes and give you milk to drink. This year of yours is one of drought; therefore, I am returning (to Makkah), and you too should return (with me)." None objected to this deferment, and all men headed back with Abu Sufyan. It seemed that his army, too, was equally anxious and experienced the same combined feelings of fear and awe.

The Muslims remained at Badr for eight days, waiting for their enemy to show up. In the meantime, they took advantage of their stay by participating in the seasonal trade that was taking place. They sold their merchandise and earned two dirhams for every dirham they spent, making handsome profits.

Upon receiving news of the retreat of the Quraysh's army, the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) returned to Madinah with his Companions. Their status was regained, and their dignity reinforced. The balance of power had shifted back in their favor, while the *Mushrikin* preferred to withdraw from the scene on the pretext that it was a year of drought.

The incident was referred to as "Badr, the Second" or "Badr the Minor."

The Expedition of Dawmat Al-Jandal

In the Year 5 A.H. During the Month of Rabi` Al-Awwal

The success of the last expedition brought peace and security to the area and significant stability for the Muslim state. Then, after a six-month suspension of military activities during which the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) stayed in Madinah, he received intelligence that some tribes in the oasis of Dawmat Al-Jandal, which lay on the border between Hejaz and Al-Sham, were committing highway robbery and plundering the passing trade caravans. They were also amassing large forces to launch an attack upon Madinah.

Without delay, the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) left Siba` ibn `Urfutah Al-Ghifari in charge of Madinah and proceeded with an army of one thousand men, following the tactic of marching by night and hiding by day to advance unnoticed and launch a surprise attack upon the enemy.

No sooner did the Muslim army approach Dawmat Al-Jandal than its people fled in different directions, leaving the area deserted and their cattle and shepherds abandoned. The Muslim army captured and carried away some of them as booty, while others escaped. They encountered none of the enemy fighters.

The Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) camped there for several days during which he dispatched regiments and military units to locate the enemy, but they could not detect any. He (PBBUH) returned to Madinah, successful in his goal of subduing hostile forces.

On the journey homeward, the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) concluded a peace treaty with `Uyainah ibn Hisn. He obtained the Prophet's (PBBUH) permission to pasture his animals on a tract of land thirty-six miles from Madinah because his own land had become arid.

The geographic location of Dawmat Al-Jandal was a reflection of the extent to which the influence and authority of the Muslims had reached in the region, and the awe with which the Arabian Peninsula treated them.

With these immediate and decisive measures, the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) achieved security and stability in Madinah and maintained peace in the whole region after a time of unrest, turmoil, and tribulations that had converged upon the Muslims from all directions: from the Quraysh, from the Jews, and from the Bedouin Arab tribes. The restored security allowed the Muslims to resume their main mission of calling people to Islam and conveying the Message of the Lord of Existence.

The Battle of Al-Khandaq (Trench)

The expulsion of the Jews of Banu Al-Nadir from Madinah and the appropriating of their property by the Muslims left them with an indelible grudge and a relentless desire to exact revenge. They had been anxiously waiting the outcome of the ongoing tension between the Muslims and the idolaters, but their hopes were dashed when the Muslims emerged more powerful and prosperous each time. Infuriated, they graduated to a new level of scheming and planning of a deceptive stroke against the Muslims. They wanted a war of annihilation; but being too cowardly to venture forth on their own and wage it directly themselves, the leaders of the Banu Al-Nadir settled on the idea of inciting and rallying all disbelieving Arab tribes. In unison, they would form a formidable army of allied forces strong enough to uproot Muhammad (PBBUH) and those who were with him.

To execute their plan, a high-level Jewish delegation set out from Khaybar to Makkah to negotiate the war alliance. The delegation consisted of twenty chiefs of the Jews of Khaybar and the influential leaders of Banu Al-Nadir and was headed by Huyai ibn Akhtab. They met with the Quraysh and started stirring them up to attack Madinah.

Because of their repeated defeat, the men of the Quraysh felt hesitant. To bolster their confidence and ignite their passion for war, the Jews provided them with motives and elements of reassurance, including the following:

- The economic danger the Muslims presented to their trade caravans to Al-Sham region and their detrimental influence on their economy in general.
- The active presence of Banu Al-Nadir in the area between Khaybar and Madinah, waiting for the arrival of the Quraysh to join their troops and march forward together against the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH).

- Banu Qurayzah remained in Madinah as a base for them to plot against the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH), and they would back the Qurayshi forces from within the city as soon as they arrived.

In Fervor for War, the Jews Declare Idolatry Better Than Islam

Hesitation and fear were still holding the Quraysh back. After all, the only cause of conflict between them and Muhammad (PBBUH) was the new faith which he wanted them to embrace in place of their ancient religion. They had to admit that his call to Islam was gaining strength and success every day, which left them uncertain about him; maybe truth was on his side?

So, Abu Sufyan asked Huyai ibn Akhtab, “You are the people of the First Book, and you know the issue of difference between us and Muhammad. Is our religion better or his?” The question indicated the Quraysh’s lack of confidence in their beliefs and their lack of conviction. However, an unexpected answer came back. “Your religion is better than his,” Huyai ibn Akhtab replied, “and you are worthier of (closer to) the truth than him,” thereby boldly contradicting the teachings of the Torah. Actually, it was hatred, malice, and spite, not the principles of Judaism, that governed their actions and decisions and made them favor idol worship over monotheism.

Allah (Glorified be He) made special reference to this unjust attitude of the Jews with His Saying: “Have you not seen those who were given a portion of the Scripture yet believe in superstition and false objects of worship and say about the disbelievers, ‘These are more rightly guided than the believers?’ They are those whom Allah has cursed; and he whom Allah curses, you will not find for him any helper.” (Al-Nisa’ 4:51-52)

The Jews Inciting and Rallying the Confederates

Huyai ibn Akhtab's words pleased the Quraysh greatly, and their zeal was kindled in earnest. They agreed to attack Madinah with the Jews as a single army and started gathering together forces and preparing for war.

But securing the involvement and cooperation of the Quraysh was not enough. Huyai ibn Akhtab and the same group of Jews toured the region with the same proposal of joint war. They persuaded the tribes of Ghatafan, Banu Murrah, Banu Sulaim, Banu Asad, and other pagan entities who held resentment or desire for revenge against the Muslims to join the confederation. They told them that the Quraysh had allied with them in making war on the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) and cajoled them into taking part by praising their polytheistic religion and making confident proclamations of their inevitable victory.

The Vast Confederate Army Amassed and Marching towards Madinah

The great procession of the Confederate Army that had been rallied started coming towards Madinah simultaneously from every direction, forming a huge military campaign aimed at the destruction of the Muslims.

The bulk of the Confederate Army was made up of the Quraysh, who were four thousand strong, with three hundred horses and fifteen hundred camels lined up behind the flag bearer `Uthman ibn Talhah ibn Abu Talhah, whose father and paternal uncles had been killed carrying the flag during the Battle of Uhud.

Ghatafan set out with an army of two thousand fighters and several units made up of various forces drawn from the branches of Banu Fazarah, Banu Asad, Banu Ashja`, Banu Sulaim, and other tribal groups.

At a specific time agreed upon by the allied parties, they marched to Madinah and assembled in its outskirts. In all, the army numbered ten thousand fighting men, commanded by Abu Sufyan. They formed the largest army in the

history of Arab Wars in the Arabian Peninsula. The size of its force outnumbered the citizens of Madinah – women, children, and the elderly included.

The News of the War Coalition Reaches Madinah

If this coalition of armies had arrived by surprise at Madinah, it would have been the most destructive force ever to hit the Muslims, with the strong prospect of bringing about their complete elimination. But Madinah, under the leadership of the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH), kept on the alert. It was constantly collecting information, monitoring conditions, and assessing and addressing any risks.

From the moment this vast army commenced moving, thorough and timely intelligence information was passed to the leadership of Madinah.

Preparing for the Confrontations Looming Ahead

The Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) held an emergency meeting of his senior Companions to consult on and devise the best defense strategy to protect Madinah. The question was, what could the Muslims possibly do to withstand the ten thousand fighters approaching, who were well prepared and equipped compared to the Muslims?

The only choice that presented itself to them in the face of this imminent onslaught was to remain barricaded inside the city. It was nevertheless questionable whether such a tactic would be sufficient on its own against the overwhelming force of the allied Jewish and pagan armies.

Salman, the Persian, Suggests Digging a Trench around Madinah

Salman was a native of Persia who undertook a long journey in search of the True God before coming to Madinah and converting to Islam. He knew some war tactics that were not familiar to the Arabs, and so he said, “O Messenger of Allah, whenever we fell under siege in the land of Persia, we used to dig trenches to defend ourselves.”

This innovative practice of digging defensive trenches to hold off enemy attacks was a strategy never previously used by the Arabs in their wars. It earned the consent of the Prophet (PBBUH) and was unanimously regarded by his Companions as the wisest plan to adopt. The Prophet (PBBUH) acted upon it immediately, and set everyone to work digging the trench, just as Salman had suggested.

Commencing the Digging of the Trench

The first step in the implementation of the plan was selecting the best location for the trench. The Prophet (PBBUH) and his Companions chose to dig the trench along the northern front of Madinah, which was the side of the city most vulnerable to attack. The other sides were naturally well fortified by very rugged volcanic plateaus, not traversable on foot or horseback; one to the east known as Harrat (volcanic field of) Waqim, and another to the west known as Harrat Wabarah.

Adjacent and closely connected to this rocky volcanic terrain were clusters of dense palm tree orchards and tall contiguous houses on the southern side that made the area impenetrable.

The Prophet (PBBUH) divided the digging work. He (PBBUH) assigned forty cubits (about eighteen meters) of digging to every group of ten men, and he (PBBUH) himself fully participated in the work, lifting the heavy rocks and getting covered in dirt. The Muslims persistently and diligently carried on digging the trench and the Prophet (PBBUH) worked side by side with them, encouraging and supporting them.

Miracles Occurring during the Digging of the Trench

As the excavation of the trench proceeded, wonders and divine interventions took place through the Prophet (PBBUH) that helped surmount the rigors of the task. While digging the trench, the Muslims became overwhelmed with extreme fatigue and hunger. The Prophet (PBBUH) tried to distract them from the

hardships of toil and gave them relief by inspiring their souls with loftier aims and meaningful compensations; and so, carrying the earth and with the earth covering his abdomen, he (PBBUH) chanted these verses:

*O Allah, there is no true life except that of the Hereafter,
So forgive Al-Ansar and Al-Muhajirah*

His Companions joined in, repeating:

*O Allah! Without You, we would not have been guided,
Nor would we have given in charity, nor would we have prayed.
So (O Allah), please send tranquility upon us and make our feet firm if we meet
the enemy.*

In the course of the digging, the Muslims came across a huge rock which their pickaxes could not break up. They complained of it to the Prophet (PBBUH), so he took up the axe, said, “***Bismillah* (in the Name of Allah),**” and struck it a blow that broke off a third of it. “***Allahu Akbar* (Allah is Greater)!**” he (PBBUH) said. “**I have been given the keys of Al-Sham (Greater Syria). By Allah, I see its red palaces at the moment.**” He (PBBUH) struck at the rock a second time and another third broke off. He (PBBUH) said, “***Allahu Akbar! I have been given the keys of Persia. By Allah, I see now the white palace of Al-Mada’in.***” For the third time, he struck the rock, saying, “***Bismillah,***” causing the rest of the rock to shatter. He (PBBUH) said, “***Allahu Akbar! I have been given the keys of Yemen. By Allah, I can see the gates of San `a’ from where I am here.***”

Not only did the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) partake in physical labor alongside his Companions, but he also shared in their hardship. Just like them, he (PBBUH) suffered the pangs of hunger during the long days of hard digging.

One day, the Companions complained to the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) of the extreme hunger they were experiencing. They uncovered their stomachs to show how each of them was tying a stone over it (as a crude method of alleviating

hunger). The Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) then uncovered his stomach and they saw that he had two stones wrapped over his stomach (signifying that his hunger was even more severe than theirs).

On one occasion during the excavation of the trench, one of the Prophet's (PBBUH) Companions, named Jabir ibn `Abdullah, could not bear to see the Prophet (PBBUH) starving. He went back to his house and asked his wife to prepare some food. He had a lamb, which he slaughtered, and a *Sa`* (approximately 3 kg) of barley, which his wife ground. They finished the preparations together and placed the cuts of meat into the cooking pot. Jabir then went to the Prophet (PBBUH) and discreetly invited him to a meal at his house, along with just a few of his Companions due to the meagerness of the food that would be served.

The Prophet (PBBUH) accepted Jabir's invitation and also asked the men digging the trench – all one thousand of them – to come along with him to the meal, saying loudly, **“O People of the Trench! Jabir has prepared a feast for you! You are all welcome!”**

The Prophet (PBBUH) arrived at Jabir's house ahead of his Companions and, knowing that Jabir would be anxious if he knew how many people were coming, asked Jabir to let him serve the food. The Prophet (PBBUH) invoked Allah's blessings on the food, after which everyone arrived and ate until they were full. Yet the pot remained full to the brim, undiminished.

The Hypocrites Attempt to Demoralize and Weaken the Muslims

A group of hypocrites joined in digging the trench, even though they were essentially opposed to it. They tried their best to thwart the accomplishment of this defensive plan and to break the resolve of the Muslims, who had undertaken this very laborious task under the most difficult conditions.

The hypocrites, as was their nature (weak, cowardly, and disloyal), incited discouragement and questioned the futility of the undertaking. They exhibited laziness and indifference when digging, and worked as slowly as they could. They only did small tasks that required little effort and would sneak away to their families without the knowledge or permission of the Prophet (PBBUH), as opposed to the Muslims who were committed to the project and worked tirelessly by the side of the Prophet (PBBUH). Only when some urgent matter arose for one of them would they leave work to attend to it, after getting permission from the Prophet (PBBUH). They would then return to work as quickly as possible after dealing with the matter. This was because the Muslims' loyalties and aspirations were truly fixed on Allah's Pleasure and Reward.

Completion of the Trench

The excavation work persisted with such firm will and determination that the entire tunnel was dug in only six days, as had been planned, and before the arrival of the Quraysh and its confederates. It extended from the eastern to the western Harrah (lava field), and was two kilometers long, six meters wide, and five meters deep.

Well-Planned Defense Strategy

Once the Muslims had finished digging the trench, Madinah was protected from all directions: from the east by natural volcanic rocks; from the north by the tunnel; and from the south by Banu Qurayzah through the pledge they made with the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH).

The Muslim army, three thousand strong, encamped with their backs to Mount Sala' and the trench lying between them and the enemy, ready to execute the plan put on place by the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH), which consisted of the following elements:

1. Presence of the army along the trench; any of the enemy soldiers who tried to cross it – at any point – would be attacked.

2. Stationing a force of two hundred men along the length of the trench to guard and warn of any surprise attacks, and to constantly monitor the hills overlooking the tunnel with shifts of men.
3. Deploying a force of five hundred men in different areas of the city to ensure its safety and prevent any of the enemy from slipping through.
4. Internal fortification of the city by reinforcing the walls of the houses facing the enemy located within two leagues (six miles) of the trench. Any buildings situated behind the trench were evacuated and the women and children inhabitants were transferred to the inner, well-fortified houses of the city. Rocks were also heaped up on the city side of the trench for use as projectile weapons when needed.
5. Implementation of the article contained in the treaty made between the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) and the Jews of Banu Qurayzah, according to which the Banu Qurayzah were required to foil any penetration attempts on the south-eastern side of Madinah, where their houses were located.

The Confederate Army Taken Aback by the Trench

It was winter, which was bitterly cold and tough that year. The Quraysh and their allied forces arrived at Uhud expecting to meet the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) and the Muslims there, but they found no sign of them.

They proceeded to Madinah, with high confidence of achieving a quick victory, relying on their superior numbers and weapons. They continued marching until, to their surprise, they were met with a trench, too deep and wide to cross. The sight of the trench struck the confederate army with amazement and panic. They had not expected this defensive tactic. It was totally novel to them and other Arabs in the region.

When Abu Sufyan caught sight of the trench, he exclaimed in amazement, "This is a new strategy previously unknown to the Arabs!" He realized that it would stand as an impediment to the advance of his troops. With fury, the

Mushrikin began to walk around and survey the trench to try and find any vulnerable areas where they could break through to Madinah.

As ordered by the Prophet (PBBUH), the Muslims kept themselves ready for any attacks or skirmishes. They pelted arrows to deter the enemy from approaching the trench, or sneaking through any gaps, or filling it in with earth and crossing it.

Eventually, the confederate army realized the impossibility of crossing the trench that surrounded Madinah and restricted their actions to exchanging arrows and laying siege to Madinah.

A Duel Resulting in the Death of a Veteran Opponent

While the confederate army was besieging the trench surrounding Madinah in vain, some veteran Qurayshi fighters grew impatient with standing and waiting for the outcome of the siege without taking any action. It was incompatible with their character as warriors. Therefore, a party of them galloped out to attempt to penetrate the trench. Among the horsemen who led the action were `Amr ibn `Abd Wudd, `Ikrimah ibn Abu Jahl, and Dirar ibn Al-Khattab.

They aimed at a narrow section of the trench through which they rushed their horses and crossed over to marshy ground between the trench and Mount Sala, where the camp of the Muslims lay. Responding immediately, `Ali ibn Abu Talib came out to them with a group of Muslims, recaptured the narrow section by which they gained entry, and stopped them from advancing any further.

The Qurayshi horsemen then rode at a fast pace toward the Muslim group, and when they came to a halt, `Amr ibn `Abd Wudd challenged the Muslims to a duel. `Amr ibn `Abd Wudd was one of the valiant men of the Quraysh, known for his power to vanquish any opponent he faced. He fought fiercely in the Battle of Badr and was wounded so badly that he was unable to participate in the Battle

of Uhud. On this day, he crossed the trench wearing a mark to make himself visible (and formidable).

`Amr ibn `Abd Wudd challenged anyone to a duel, saying, “Who will fight a duel with me?” `Ali stepped forward, after being granted permission from the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH), ready for a fight. On seeing him, `Amr ibn `Abd Wudd arrogantly and overconfidently exclaimed, “Why, O my nephew¹? By Allah, I do not want to kill you.” `Ali replied with a courageous, challenging tone, “But I, by Allah, want to kill you.” This infuriated `Amr and, with such a spirit, the duel commenced. The two fought each other fiercely until `Ali killed `Amr, upon which the remaining fighters panicked and fled the area on horseback, darting through the section of the trench through which they had come. They were so stricken with fear that `Ikrimah, while retreating with his company, abandoned his lance.

This critical situation lasted for several days, with no direct engagement taking place. Rather, most of the fighting took the form of skirmishes and repeated attempts to infiltrate the trench or create a path to cross over to the other side, all of which were repelled by a barrage of arrows from the Muslims.

A Spirit of Defeat Sets in Among the Confederates While the Believers Continue Steadfast

Ten days had elapsed since the beginning of the siege without any serious military action performed by either side. Exhaustion had started to take its toll on both armies. There was no surplus of food in Madinah. The Muslims relied, in part, on supplies provided by Banu Qurayzah, which helped them prolong the siege.

In the midst of these tough circumstances, the hypocrites found an opportunity to openly intensify their criticism of the Messenger of Allah

¹ Literally Ibn Akhi (my brother's son), an informal way of addressing a male stranger.

(PBBUH) and to stir confusion and unrest among the believers – such as their saying, “Muhammad promised us that we would gain possession of the treasures of Chosroes (Persian King Khosrau) and Caesar but, as matters stand now, not a single one of us is safe even to go and relieve himself (in view of the terror we are suffering).” Almighty Allah describes this position of the hypocrites in the Noble Qur’an thus: “And [remember] when the hypocrites and those in whose hearts is a disease said, ‘Allah and His Messenger promised us nothing but delusions!’” (Al-Ahzab 33:12)

The believers, on the other hand, only became stronger in faith and steadfastness through the course of the ordeal; Almighty Allah describes them in the Noble Qur’an thus: “And when the believers saw the confederates, they said, ‘This is what Allah and His Messenger (Muhammad) had promised us, and Allah and His Messenger (Muhammad) had spoken the truth, and it only added to their faith and to their submissiveness (to Allah).’” (Al-Ahzab 33:22)

A state of discontent and frustration prevailed among the ranks of the confederate army; the siege grew long and the provisions short. Strong wind, rain, and freezing cold descended upon them, causing the situation to become unbearable. They had entered this war with the expectation of an easy, quick win to be achieved in one day – similar to the Battle of Badr. They had assumed that they would head home victorious after a couple of days, after inflicting an overwhelming defeat upon the Muslims. But unlike what they had planned, the siege dragged on uselessly, food supplies dwindled, and anxiety and defeatism took hold of the confederate army. They found themselves in a deadlock, which led some of them to consider pulling back their troops and retreating.

Huyai Entertains Fears of the Withdrawal of the Confederates

Huyai ibn Akhtab, the chieftain of Banu Al-Nadir and a principal planner of the Battle of Al-Ahzab, carefully weighed all these considerations, as well as the catastrophic consequences of retreat. He understood that there was no alternative left but to seek the last resort: Banu Qurayzah. He began employing this last

option without delay, assuring his allies that he would convince Banu Qurayzah to breach their treaty with the Muslims and join their camp. This step would lead to a complete cut-off of supplies to the Muslims on one hand, while opening a way into the interior of Yathrib (Madinah) on the other. The Quraysh and the rest of the confederate forces were pleased by the plan, seeing it as their only exit from this impasse.

Attempts to Induce Banu Qurayzah to Renege on Their Treaty Commitments

Huyai ibn Akhtab went straight to the neighborhood of Banu Qurayzah and directly to the house of their chief, Ka`b ibn Asad, who surmised the reasons behind his visit, with all its hazardous consequences.

He knew that Huyai came to him as a Jewish man demanding assistance against the Muslims. He also discerned that just as treason against the Muslims might be advantageous to the Jews of Banu Qurayzah, the defeat and departure of the confederates could bring about their extermination.

Therefore, when Ka`b ibn Asad heard Huyai coming, he locked the door. When Huyai knocked and asked permission to enter, Ka`b refused to open it. But Huyai persisted, knocking and shouting to be allowed in. He did not withdraw until Ka`b acceded to his request and allowed him inside.

Banu Qurayzah Break Their Treaty with the Prophet (PBBUH)

As soon as Ka`b entered, Huyai said to him, “Woe to you, O Ka`b. I have brought you everlasting honor and an overflowing sea (of soldiers). I have brought you the Quraysh, with their leaders and chiefs, and Ghatafan (leading Arabian tribe), with their leaders and chiefs. They have made a covenant and a contract with me that they shall not leave until we uproot Muhammad and those with him.”

Ka`b replied, “By Allah, you have brought me everlasting disgrace... Woe to you, O Huyai! Leave me to continue with my covenant (with Muhammad), for I have seen nothing from Muhammad except truth and faithfulness.” But Huyai stood his ground, reminding Ka`b of what had already befallen the Jews at the hands of the Muslims and what might further happen to them if the confederate army failed to destroy the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH).

Then, after ceaseless persuasion from Huyai, Ka`b started to yield and eventually backed off from his position. However, he sought guarantees for their safety and asked, “What (would be the fate of Banu Qurayzah) if the confederates should withdraw?” In response, Huyai gave the leader of Banu Qurayzah his solemn pledge that if the Quraysh and their allies retreated without killing Muhammad (PBBUH), he would come and join Ka`b in his stronghold to face the same fate as him.

The sense of Jewish identity was stirred up in Ka`b and prevailed at last. He agreed to Huyai’s demands that he should renounce his treaty with Muhammad (PBBUH) and the Muslims, and the accession of Banu Qurayzah to the ranks of the confederate army, to mount with them a unified attack against the Muslims. However, he asked for ten days to prepare for warfare.

The First Signs of Treason Start to Emerge

Banu Qurayzah began executing scouting missions for the Quraysh and their allies. They also began sending loads of provisions to them, after they totally cut off their supplies to the Muslims, which reduced the food supply for each Muslim person to one fourth.

Their betrayal of the Muslims was further marked by one significant incident: targeting the unprotected. On the Prophet’s (PBBUH) command, the women and children were moved to a small stronghold that previously belonged to Banu Qaynuqa`, southeast of Madinah and not far from Banu Qurayzah. There was only one man, Hassan bin Thabit, appointed as a guard at that stronghold.

Among the women present was Lady Safiyah, the Prophet's paternal aunt. One day, she saw a fully armed Jew moving stealthily around the citadel as if trying to assess the situation inside and find an entry point. She immediately realized he was a spy who was gathering and reporting information and observations. If he went back and informed the Jews of the fact that there were only women and children inside, they would be vulnerable to attack because of their lack of defense.

Lady Safiyah knew that this turn of events needed instant, courageous action, so she took a pole, went down, and directly struck the Jew, who fell and died on the spot.

The Prophet (PBBUH) Investigates the Truth of Banu Qurayzah's Treason

All signs pointed glaringly to the fact that Banu Qurayzah had betrayed the Prophet (PBBUH) and joined the confederate army. To confirm this, the Prophet (PBBUH) dispatched Sa`d ibn Mu`adh (the chief of Al-Aws in former Yathrib), Sa`d ibn `Ubadah (the chief of Al-Khazraj in former Yathrib), and `Abdullah ibn Rawahah to verify the news. He (PBBUH) instructed them that if they found evidence that it was true, they should inform him indirectly, by insinuation and allusion, so that only he (PBBUH) would understand and the Muslims would not be discouraged by such a treacherous development. But if the news proved false and Banu Qurayzah were still committed to the obligations of their treaty with the Muslims, they could announce their findings directly and publicly to inspire hope.

The men delegated to the task carried out the orders. When they went to the area of Banu Qurayzah, they discovered that not only was the intelligence true, but the situation was much worse than they had anticipated. Banu Qurayzah showed complete disregard for the treaty and behaved rudely towards them. They openly voiced their enmity and resentment, to the point of denying and reviling the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH). "Who is this so-called Messenger of Allah?

There is no covenant or pact between us and Muhammad,” they said. The meeting became very tense and the conversation between the two parties came close to escalating into an exchange of insults.

Upon completing the fact-finding mission, the delegation returned to brief the Prophet (PBBUH). After greeting him, they conveyed the situation in two words – `Adal and Qarah – by which they were alluding to the two tribes of Hudhail who had betrayed the Companions of the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) at the Tragedy of Al-Raji`. With these two words, the Prophet (PBBUH) understood that, like the `Adal and Qarah tribes, Banu Qurayzah had just betrayed the Muslims.

The Prophet (PBBUH) Resorts to Policy

Aware of the deeply critical military situation they were now facing, the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) started considering some political moves that would help undermine the force of the confederates and weaken the siege imposed upon them.

He (PBBUH) chose to negotiate with the two leaders of Ghatafan, `Uyainah ibn Hisn and Al-Harith ibn `Awf, and sent for them to meet with him. He (PBBUH) offered them one third of the Madinah fruit harvest on the condition that they and their troops cease taking part in actions against the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) and his Companions and return to their homeland.

This strategy aimed to break the power of the confederates by achieving the withdrawal of Ghatafan, which might give rise to a possible disengagement and withdrawal of other coalition forces in imitation of them. If this strategy went as planned, the reduction in the confederates would help the Muslims deliver a quick defeat against the Quraysh, who had already tested their strength several times in previous confrontations.

The Ansar Objects

The negotiations between the two sides progressed to the point of drawing up a written document setting out the terms of their agreement. Before taking any executive steps in the matter, the Prophet (PBBUH) consulted the opinions of his two Ansari Companions, Sa`d ibn Mu`adh and Sa`d ibn `Ubadah, who both replied, “O Messenger of Allah, is this something Allah has commanded you to do that we must do or is this something you are doing for us?” The Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) replied, **“Rather, it is something I am doing for you. By Allah, I am doing this only because I have seen that the Arabs are shooting at you from a single bow and coming at you from every direction. I want to reduce, at least to some degree, their strength against you.”**

Sa`d ibn Mu`adh said, “O Messenger of Allah, when we and these people (i.e., the Ghatafan tribe) practiced *Shirk* (associating false gods with Allah) and idolatry and neither worshipped Allah nor knew Him, they (the Ghatafan tribe) did not expect to eat a single piece of fruit from it (Madinah), unless they received it as guests or purchased it. Now that Allah has conferred Islam on us and strengthened and honored us with you (among us), would we (willingly) give up to them our wealth! We have no need for this (arrangement)! By Allah, we will give them nothing but the sword until Allah judges between us and them.” The Prophet (PBBUH) accepted their opinion, and the agreement was cancelled.

Allah’s Care Provides a Way out

When Allah (Exalted be He) wants to take care of a people, He supplies them with the means of victory and success from where they do not expect. Allah presented the Muslims with another opportunity to weaken the confederate army in the form of an influential man from Ghatafan named Nu`aim ibn Mas`ud. He had recently embraced Islam and kept it secret. He enjoyed an important status and had strong ties with the three parties who conspired against the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH): the Quraysh, the Ghatafan, and the Jews of Banu Qurayzah.

One night, Nu`aim ibn Mas`ud, acting upon his new-found faith, went stealthily to Madinah and met with the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH), announcing to him his Islam. He said, "O Messenger of Allah, I have become a Muslim and my people are not aware of my Islam; so, give me whatever orders you wish."

The Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) replied, "**You are only one man among us** (i.e., if you join us, our situation will not greatly improve), **but try to incite disruption among them** (i.e., break up the enemy's political cohesiveness and trustworthiness) **to ward them off us if you can** (an achievable one-man task); **for indeed war is stratagem.**"

War Is Indeed Stratagem: Nu`aim Provokes Distrust between the Confederate Forces

Endowed with the capabilities for the mission, Nu`aim knew exactly what needed to be done, and immediately headed for Banu Qurayzah. He understood the vulnerability of their position relative to the other parties in the alliance. They had breached their treaty with the Muslims, which stipulated not only to preserve neutrality in the event of war, but to give full support to the Muslims against their enemy. If the confederate army decided to withdraw, they would be the ones who would lose the most. They would face not only expulsion (as happened with the two Jewish tribes of Banu Al-Nadir and Banu Qaynuqa`) but the death penalty for blatant treason.

Nu`aim knew their precarious position and played on it. When he sat down with Ka`b and the chiefs of Banu Qurayzah, he said, "O Banu Qurayzah, you know my affection for you and my fear for you. Shall I tell you something which you must keep secret?" They said, "Yes." Nu`aim continued, "You have seen what happened to Banu Qaynuqa` and Banu Al-Nadir. The position of Quraysh and Ghatafan is not like yours (in this war). This country is your country; your property, children, and wives are here. You cannot leave it for another place. The Quraysh and Ghatafan have come to make war on Muhammad and his

Companions, and you have supported them against him, while their country, property, and wives are elsewhere. Only if they see an opportunity will they seize it. Otherwise, they will return to their country, leaving you alone to confront Muhammad, who will exact revenge on you.”

They asked, “What should we do, O Nu`aim?”

Nu`aim replied, “Do not fight alongside them (the Quraysh and Ghatafan) until you have taken hostages from among their noblemen, to have them in your hands as security that they will fight Muhammad with you until you destroy him.”

Nu`aim’s opinion was well received by Banu Qurayzah, and they resolved to act upon it forthwith.

Nu`aim then left them and returned to the Quraysh camp and, acting as their sincere advisor, said, “You know my affection for you and my sincerity towards you. I have been informed of an issue which I consider it my duty to apprise you of, but you must keep it secret. Banu Qurayzah are regretting what they did with Muhammad (breaching their covenant with him). They are apprehensive about your retreating and abandoning them to him. Therefore, they have sent a message to him, saying, ‘We regret what we have done. Would you be satisfied if we take some nobles from the tribes of the Quraysh and Ghatafan and hand them over to you, so that you can behead them? Then we will fight with you against any of them that remain until we eliminate them.’ He sent them his reply, ‘Yes.’ So, if the Jews send to you asking for some of your men as a guarantee, do not send to them a single man.” Nu`aim then headed for Ghatafan and told them the same thing he had told the Quraysh and gave them the same warning.

Nu`aim’s ploy worked brilliantly. Mutual suspicion and distrust soon spread among the parties of the confederate army. The ten-day period demanded by Banu Qurayzah to make necessary preparations had expired, and doubt began to creep into Abu Sufyan, who placed great reliance on their aid. He dispatched a delegation headed by `Ikrimah ibn Abu Jahl, and composed of men from the

Quraysh and Ghatafan, to Banu Qurayzah to arrange for a joint attack the following day.

The delegation led by `Ikrimah arrived on a Saturday night. They informed the Jews of Banu Qurayzah of the critical nature of the situation, saying, “We are not in a land where we can stay long, and our horses and camels have perished (for lack of fodder). So let us fight that battle and finish off Muhammad.” But their answer to them was, “Today is Saturday (the Jewish Sabbath), a day on which we do nothing. Some of us (our ancestors) violated it, and you know well what befell them. Moreover, we will not fight alongside you against Muhammad until you give us some of your men as hostages to remain in our hands as security for us until we destroy Muhammad. We fear that if the war becomes tense and the fighting becomes severe, you will hurry back to your lands, leaving us with the man in our land, and then we shall have no strength against him.”

The envoys returned to the Quraysh and Ghatafan with the reply of Banu Qurayzah, which led them to fully believe and trust Nu`aim’s words. They said, “By Allah, Nu`aim has told you the truth.” They sent the following message back to the Jews informing them of their decision: “By Allah, we will not send (hand) you a single one of our men. If you want to fight, come out and fight.” On receiving this message, Banu Qurayzah said, “By Allah, Nu`aim has told you the truth.” In this way, an atmosphere of distrust and suspicion prevailed among the parties of the confederate forces. Division ensued and mutual fear was the dominant factor.

The Prophet (PBBUH) Beseches Allah’s Support

Meanwhile, while going through such an intensely hard time, the Muslims implored Allah’s Aid, saying, as guided by Prophet Muhammad (PBBUH), “**O Allah, cover up our `Awarat** (i.e., our weaknesses, faults, failures, sins, etc.) **and transform our horror (insecurities and fears) into peace.**” The Prophet (PBBUH) also supplicated the Almighty against the confederate army, saying, “O

Allah, the Revealer of the Book, the Swift Taker of Accounts! Defeat the confederates. O Allah, defeat them and shake them.”

Allah Responds to the Prophet’s (PBBUH) Invocation by Sending a Cold and Sweeping Wind

Allah (the Exalted) answered the Prophet’s (PBBUH) supplication. Disunion and division had spread through the ranks of the confederate army, who had been camping at the trench for nearly twenty days, and an atmosphere of distrust and tension was now dominant between them. During the night, Allah sent a storm of heavy rain, thunder, and violent winds against them that swept away their tents, extinguished their fires, overturned their cooking pots, and left the *Mushrikin* terrified.

“Depart! I am Departing”

Seeing the devastation that the storm brought, Abu Sufyan stood up and addressed the people, saying, “O people of the Quraysh, by Allah you are not in a place of settlement (i.e., where it is possible to stay). The horses and camels have perished. The tribe of Banu Qurayzah have broken their pledge to us, and we have received news about them that we dislike (i.e., their change of stance with the coalition partners). You see how we are afflicted by these strong winds. None of our cooking vessels can stand upright. None of our fires can keep burning, and none of our tents can stay in place. Let us depart, for I am departing.”

As no objection was raised by any of the participating parties, and as the storm continued to rage on, the Quraysh began a full retreat back to their homeland, taking with them only their light belongings. On learning that the Quraysh were retreating, the massive tribe of Ghatafan, as well as all minor tribes in the confederacy, followed their decision and also began retreating to their homelands. Khalid ibn Al-Walid and `Amr ibn Al-`As rode at the back of the

army to cover them from an unexpected attack by any Muslims who might come in pursuit of them.

The Prophet (PBBUH) Seeks Confirmed Intelligence of the Enemy's Departure

On that stormy night, when everyone was extremely cold and exhausted, the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) singled out Hudhaifah ibn Al-Yaman to go inside the enemy's camp and investigate their intentions. Hudhaifah succeeded in infiltrating the enemy's ranks and soon found out that their situation was desperate. Their camp was in havoc by the ongoing storm and they were making preparations to leave. Hudhaifah ibn Al-Yaman returned immediately to the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) and apprised him of the fact that the confederates were hastily retreating homeward.

Ultimate Military Decline of the Quraysh

Abu Sufyan returned with the bitterness of defeat lying heavy upon him. The Quraysh's position of prestige and authority among the Arabs was forever lost after their unsuccessful attack. Instead, the Battle of Al-Ahzab (Confederates) [another name for the Battle of Al-Khandaq (Trench)] not only reasserted the status of the Muslims as a power to be reckoned with in the region, but also accentuated that the turn of events, after this lost battle, would usher in a new era. A rising empire was expected to follow the withdrawal of such tough warriors as the Quraysh and Ghatafan.

On the other side, that same morning brought relief to the Muslims. They became certain that the confederate army had departed. They all sensed Allah's Glory filling their hearts and lifting them up with fervent gratitude to Him. Allah (Exalted be He) spared them from fighting and drove back their enemy in their rage, totally empty-handed. Glorified be Allah, He fulfilled His Promise,

supported His soldiers, granted victory to His servant (Muhammad PBBUH), and defeated the confederates alone.

When the confederate troops left the area of the trench, the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) declared to his Companions, **“The Quraysh will never invade you after this year of yours. (From now), it is you who will invade them (i.e., you will take the offensive against them).”** [This was a prophecy that was later fulfilled. The Quraysh were never again able to invade Madinah. On the contrary, the Prophet (PBBUH) first made the unarmed expedition of Al-Hudaibiyah and then the Conquest of Makkah.]

In the month of Dhul Qa`dah in the year 5 A.H., after a month’s siege, the confederate army – divided by distrust and fear – gave up and left. Allah’s Help in accomplishing the defeat of Al-Ahزاب was so evident and so immense that Allah describes it as a gift of grace from Him in His Words: **“O you who have believed, remember Allah’s Favor upon you when armies came against you; then We (Allah) sent against them a wind and armies (of angels) you did not see. And Allah is ever Seeing of what you do. When they came at you from above you (east from the top of the valley) and from below you (west from the bottom of the valley), and when the eyes grew wild (in fear) and the hearts reached to the throats, and you were harboring doubts about Allah.”** (Al-Ahزاب 33:9-10)

The Muslims planned and prepared themselves as much as they were able to, but they were largely outmatched in number. The most brilliant military strategy ever conceived could not have availed them. Only Allah alone could defeat the confederates.

The Battle of Banu Qurayzah

The next day, just when the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) and the Muslims had arrived at Madinah and were putting down their weapons, Angel Jibril came to the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH). He asked him, **“Have you put down the arms, O Messenger of Allah?”** When he (PBBUH) responded in the affirmative,

“Yes,” Angel Jibril (PBUH) replied, “The angels have not yet put down their arms. I have just come from pursuing the enemy. Allah (the Exalted and Majestic) commands you, O Muhammad, to march to Banu Qurayzah. I am going ahead of you to shake their forts and cast fear into their hearts.” Along with a procession of angels, Jibril went ahead to the strongholds of Banu Qurayzah.

To encourage his Companions to set out without delay, the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) commanded a crier to announce to the people that those who listened and obeyed should offer the *`Asr* (Afternoon) Prayer only in the territory of Banu Qurayzah.

The Companions started on the road to Banu Qurayzah. On their way there, the time of the *`Asr* Prayer became due. A group of the Companions offered it on the spot, at its prescribed time, interpreting the Prophet’s (PBBUH) order to mean the need for swift action. Another group refused to offer it until they had reached the territory of Banu Qurayzah, acting in accordance with the literal meaning of the Prophet’s (PBBUH) order. So they offered the *`Asr* Prayer there, after the *`Isha*’ (Night) Prayer.

The Prophet (PBBUH) approved both actions from the standpoint that both rested on sound discretion: those who prayed it on time acted upon the connotative significance of his words, and those who delayed praying it until they had arrived at Banu Qurayzah acted upon the literal interpretation of his words.

Laying Siege to Banu Qurayzah

‘Ali ibn Abu Talib marched ahead carrying the flag. Behind him followed the Muslims. On approaching the strongholds of Banu Qurayzah, the Jews began hurling foul abuse at the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH), who was traveling with groups of his Companions, who were joining him in succession.

On hearing the abuse, ‘Ali went back to ask the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) not to go near the area of Banu Qurayzah. “Why?” the Prophet

(PBBUH) asked, “perhaps you have heard from them hurtful words against me?” `Ali said, “Yes,” in response to which the Prophet (PBBUH) assured him, “When they see me, they will say nothing of this.” This was the result of Allah (Exalted be He) casting fear into their hearts before the full Muslim army even got there. They shut themselves in their strongholds and avoided direct confrontation.

The Muslims continued to pour into the area until they totaled three thousand men, upon which the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) ordered the siege to begin.

A Protracted Siege Followed by Surrendering

The Jews of Banu Qurayzah remained entrenched in their citadels, with the Muslims laying siege to their neighborhood. During the siege, which lasted for twenty-five days, only a few skirmishes with arrows and stones took place, without the Jews daring to come out even once. At that point, the Jews of Banu Qurayzah realized that it was useless for them to proceed further. Their citadels would not protect them from, sooner or later, meeting the inevitable fate for their treason and breach of peace. At last, they thought of consulting the advice of a former Arab ally of theirs, who belonged to the Aws tribe and was named Abu Lubabah. They sent word to the Prophet (PBBUH) asking that Abu Lubabah be sent to them for consultation (about their surrender). With the Prophet’s (PBBUH) permission, ex-ally Abu Lubabah went to them.

On seeing Abu Lubabah, the men of Banu Qurayzah rushed to meet him, while their woman and children stood weeping bitterly before him. He was moved by pity for them. When they said to him, “O Abu Lubabah, do you think we should submit to Muhammad’s judgment?” Abu Lubabah replied to their question with “Yes,” but simultaneously drew his finger across his throat indicating that if they surrendered, they would be executed. After making this gesture, it instantly occurred to Abu Lubabah that in doing so he had betrayed Allah and His Messenger (PBBUH). His gesture hinted at the Prophet’s (PBBUH)

intentions towards Banu Qurayzah and provided the enemy with information that could shift their stance from one of surrender to one of fierce resistance.

Abu Lubabah left their place at a loss what to do. Instead of going to the Prophet (PBBUH), he went straight to the Prophet's Mosque and tied himself to one of its pillars, with a vow that nobody else but the Prophet (PBBUH) should untie him.

Meanwhile, the Prophet (PBBUH) was waiting for Abu Lubabah to return from the negotiations and noticed that it was taking him a long time. He (PBBUH) was then informed about what Abu Lubabah had done, and the penance he had imposed upon himself for it. This drew from the Prophet (PBBUH) the kind remark, **“Had he come to me, I would have begged Allah to forgive him; but, since he has acted in this way (i.e., tied himself up), I cannot release him until Allah accepts his repentance.”**

Abu Lubabah remained tied to the pillar for several days, and was only untied by his wife for prayer times. At the end of the sixth night when it was close to dawn, Allah sent down his pardon: **“And (there are) others who have acknowledged their sins; they have mixed a righteous deed with another that was bad. Perhaps Allah will turn to them in forgiveness. Indeed, Allah is Forgiving and Merciful.”** (Al-Tawbah 9:102)

The Prophet (PBBUH) came out for the *Fajr* (Dawn) Prayer and untied him.

Penalty for Capital Treason

The Jews of Banu Qurayzah had to pay the consequences for their actions – carefully planned, premeditated, coordinated, and executed. They grossly betrayed the terms of the agreement they had entered into with the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH), namely the Madinan [Coexisting] Constitution, and conspired with the confederate forces to exterminate, in one unified blow, the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH), together with his Muslim followers. To put it in

modern terms, they perpetrated the capital crime of high treason against the citizens of a city, for which capital punishment becomes mandatory by law and must be proportionate in gravity to the offence.

If left unpunished [or punished insufficiently], Banu Qurayzah were surely capable of organizing another treacherous attempt, as they had the force coupled with a relentless ill will to do so again. They would continue to be a driving factor for more wars and conflicts, making the Muslim state constantly vulnerable to attack. Allowing their treachery to go unpunished meant that Banu Qurayzah would simply wait for a more opportune time, under more advantageous weather conditions, while staying out of winter's way. Winter, one of Allah's soldiers in this battle, devastated the allied forces and inflicted a crushing defeat upon them.

One final but important detail: if disunion and the rupture of trust had not occurred among the confederates, Banu Qurayzah were avidly ready to descend upon Madinah and participate in the extermination of the Muslims. For these reasons, the punishment of Banu Qurayzah was deserved and needed to be a serious deterrent, since their offences had progressed to the most serious level.

The Aws Intercede for Banu Qurayzah

Despite guessing the punishment reserved for them through Abu Lubabah's gesture of slaughter, Banu Qurayzah finally decided to submit themselves to the judgment of the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH). Although they could have endured the siege much longer, with the aid of their plentiful food and water supplies and impregnable fortresses, they were strained to the utmost; partly with exhaustion, and partly with the fear and panic that the Almighty cast into their hearts.

Upon their surrender, the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) gave orders that the men (combatants) of Banu Qurayzah be arrested. Muhammad ibn Maslamah Al-Ansari was put in charge of executing the command. All the adult men were bound and taken away, while the women and offspring were kept in a separate place from the men.

At this point, the Aws started interceding on behalf of the Jews of Banu Qurayzah, who were their old allies (during pre-Islamic times). They said, “O Messenger of Allah, they were our allies, not allies of the Khazraj, and you know how you recently treated the allies of our brethren (i.e., accepting intercession made on their behalf by Abdullah ibn Ubai ibn Salaul and pardoning them).” On those grounds, they asked the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) to treat them the same way as he had treated the Jews of Banu Qaynuqa`, the ex-allies of the Khazraj.

The Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) replied to their request with, **“Would you be satisfied if one of your own men passes judgment on them?”** They said, “Yes.” So he (PBBUH) referred the judgment of their case to Sa`d ibn Mu`adh, the chief of the Aws. Banu Qurayzah agreed to submit to the verdict of Sa`d, whom they thought would pass upon them a lenient sentence due to their old alliance with his tribe during pre-Islamic times.

The Verdict of Sa`d ibn Mu`adh

Sa`d had sustained a serious (and ultimately) fatal wound during the Battle of Al-Ahzab that made it necessary for him to stay behind in Madinah. When the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) entrusted him with the job of arbitrating the matter of Banu Qurayzah, his tribesmen brought him, riding on a donkey. While bringing him from Madinah to the Prophet (PBBUH), they began saying to him, “O Sa`d, be kind to your allies! The Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) has appointed you judge over them so that you may treat them kindly.” Sa`d, meanwhile, kept silent. But when they pressed him too much, he said, “It is time for Sa`d to act (solely) for Allah’s Sake, fearing not the reproach of any reproacher (i.e., totally uninfluenced by people’s opinions of his verdict).”

When Sa`d reached the Prophet (PBBUH), the Muslims stood up for him and helped him dismount. Then, having been asked to pass his judgment, Sa`d turned in the direction of Banu Qurayzah and said, “Do you take upon yourselves

an oath and covenant by Allah that my judgement shall be the verdict?” They replied, “Yes.”

Sa`d then turned in the direction of the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) and said, “And is it binding upon him who is here?” while glancing downward, and not mentioning the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) out of reverence and esteem. The Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) replied, “**Yes.**”

After Sa`d had received assurance that his verdict would be final, and that everybody, on both sides, would agree to it and abide by it, he said, “Then my judgement concerning them is that their (adult combatant) men should be killed, their women and offspring should be taken as captives, and their property should be divided (as spoils of war).” The Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) approved his judgment, saying, “**You have judged them with the Judgment of Allah from above the seven heavens.**”

Sa`d bin Mu`adh delivered his verdict on the Jewish tribe of Banu Qurayzah based not on the Qur’an, but on the punishment that their book, the Torah, prescribed for defeated enemies¹. In the case of Banu Qurayzah, they were also traitors who violated their oaths to the Constitution, the Charter of Madinah, which explicitly required commitment and loyalty to the state of Madinah, particularly in the event of attack from an external army. Thus, they sealed their own fate with their actions and were punished according to their own book, in kind to what they had been determined to inflict upon the Muslims, had the confederate army been successful in destroying the Muslims.

The sentence Sa`d had pronounced was carried out; all their men [sources put their numbers at between three hundred and seven hundred fighters of Banu

¹ “When you march up to attack a city, make its people an offer of peace. If they accept and open their gates, all the people in it shall be subject to forced labor and shall work for you. If they refuse to make peace and they engage you in battle, lay siege to that city. When the Lord your God delivers it into your hand, put to the sword all the men in it. As for the women, the children, the livestock and everything else in the city, you may take these as plunder for yourselves. And you may use the plunder the LORD your God gives you from your enemies. This is how you are to treat all the cities that are at a distance from you and do not belong to the nations nearby.” (Deuteronomy 20:10-15)

Qurayzah] were beheaded, among them Huyai ibn Akhtab. Their belongings were collected from their forts and included a large arsenal that had been amassed to eradicate the Muslims. It consisted of fifteen hundred swords, two thousand spears, three hundred armors, and five hundred shields, in addition to a large number of camels and cattle, which were distributed as spoils among the Muslims after the one-fifth share was deducted.

With the fall of the last stronghold of the Jews in Madinah, the Jewish presence was terminated as a result of their treachery, enmity, and incitement to war. Their punishment, therefore, was akin in kind and degree to what they had perpetrated.

While such was the cost of the Battle of Al-Ahzab for those who had assembled, planned, and conspired the destruction of the Muslim State, its effects on the Muslims were substantially uplifting and fortifying. The power of the fakers and hypocrites vanished, and their voice was virtually gone. Neighboring Arab tribes were talking about the rising power of the Muslims and the upbuilding of their dominion.

In the Qur'anic Chapter of Al-Ahzab (the Confederates) – which takes its name from the disparate powers that coalesced against Islam – Allah, the Almighty, revealed several Qur'anic verses that depicted the most crucial parts of the confrontation and the steadfastness of the believers while exposing the reality of the hypocrites and the repercussions that the defeat brought upon the Jews because of their betrayal.

The Death of Sa`d ibn Mu`adh and the Shaking of the Lord's Throne Due to It

Once the case of Banu Qurayzah was finalized, Sa`d was brought back to Madinah. He was taken to the tent which the Prophet (PBBUH) had pitched in his mosque to enable him to be treated in close proximity to him, so that he (PBBUH) could call on Sa`d and other wounded persons as often as possible.

Upon his return to the tent, the last battle injury that Sa`d had sustained at Al-Ahzab started bleeding profusely, and Sa`d died. After burying him, those who carried his dead body remarked, "O Messenger of Allah, we have never carried a dead person lighter than him." The Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) replied, **"And what should prevent him from becoming light (to carry), when such and such angels descended, having never descended before this day, and carried him along with you."**

The position of Sa`d ibn Mu`adh (may Allah be pleased with him) among the Ansar was the same as that of Abu Bakr among the Muhajirun. He showed steadfast determination throughout all the battles fought before Al-Khandaq (the Trench Battle). The Prophet (PBBUH) loved him dearly and gave him the glad tidings of entering Paradise for his glorious actions. During his burial, the Prophet (PBBUH) was reported to have said, **"The Throne of Al-Rahman (the Merciful, the Compassionate) shook at the death of Sa`d ibn Mu`adh (because of the joy of the Lord at the coming of his soul)."**

Overview of the Military Activities that Followed the Two Battles up Until Al-Hudaibiyah Treaty

During the period that followed the Battle of Al-Khandaq (the Trench, also referred to as Al-Ahzab) and the destruction of Banu Qurayzah, the situation stabilized in favor of the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) and the Muslims. As a result, their state of Madinah achieved a secure, coherent, and consolidated identity in the region. But it remained necessary for the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) to mount precautionary campaigns against antagonistic Arab tribes, who were already involved in hostilities and betrayals against the Muslims and had massacred some of them. They constituted subordinate hostile powers who would not acquiesce to peace or allow security in the region, except when faced with no option but to submit to a higher force. For this purpose, the following military campaigns and expeditions were carried out:

The *Sariyya* (Squadron) Led by Muhammad ibn Maslamah

The first squadron to be dispatched after the conclusion of the Battles of Al-Ahzab and Banu Qurayzah was in Muharram of the year 6 A.H. The Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) sent a unit of thirty horsemen under the leadership of Muhammad ibn Maslamah. Their goal was to attack Banu Bakr bin Kilab, one of the Najd tribes, which formed a major part of the confederate army during the Battle of Al-Ahzab.

The squadron, led by Muhammad ibn Maslamah, took Banu Bakr by surprise in their homeland, called Al-Qarta' in Najd. They fled, abandoning their camels and sheep, which fell as booty to the Muslims. During the homeward journey, as the squadron was checking the grounds surrounding Madinah on their way home, they apprehended a man named Thumamah ibn Uthal Al-Hanifi, who was the chieftain of Banu Hanifah and one of the rulers of Al-Yamamah region.

None of the squadron was aware of his important status or that the reason behind his presence in the districts of Madinah was to assassinate the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH). The Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) recognized Thumamah when they brought him to Madinah. He was tied to one of the columns in the mosque. On seeing him, the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) treated him graciously, as was appropriate to his position. He (PBBUH) went back home and said to his family, **“Gather whatever food you have and send it to him (i.e., Thumamah).”** He (PBBUH) also ordered that his she-camel be milked for him twice a day.

When the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) returned to him at the mosque, he (PBBUH) approached him with a friendly, **“What have you got, O Thumamah?”** and then an offer to embrace Islam. The same conversation took place between them the next day. On the third day, at the end of the same conversation, the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) ordered his release.

The Prophet’s (PBBUH) generous treatment, and, no doubt, seeing the worshippers worshipping during the day, had worked its effect on Thumamah. Upon being freed, he went to a nearby orchard of palm trees close to Madinah, where he bathed himself, re-entered the mosque, and declared before the Prophet (PBBUH) his embracing of Islam.

Thumamah said to the Prophet (PBBUH), “I testify that there is no god but Allah and that Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah. O Muhammad! By Allah, there was no face on earth more hateful to me than yours, but now it has become the most beloved face to me. By Allah, there was no religion more hateful to me than yours, but now it has become the most beloved religion to me. By Allah, there was no town more hateful to me than yours, but now it has become the most beloved town to me.” Thumamah’s embracing of Islam, and the prospect of bringing his people towards Islam, was a source of great happiness for the Prophet (PBBUH).

Thumamah then left for Makkah to perform his first `Umrah (minor pilgrimage) as a Muslim, and to make thereby a public announcement of his conversion to Islam before returning to his homeland.

On hearing him raise his voice with devotional expressions of Islamic faith (known as *Talbiyah*¹ and chanted at certain times during Hajj and Umrah), a man from the Quraysh harassed him with this derogatory remark, “Have you apostatized, O Thumamah?” In response, he said, “No, by Allah, rather, I have embraced Islam with Muhammad, the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH).” The Quraysh then wanted to harm him, yet they refrained when they remembered their need for grain supplies from Al-Yamamah [which was a very fertile land and was the main supplier of grains to Makkah].

Before leaving, Thumamah said in earnest, “And no, by Allah! Not a single grain of wheat will come to you from Al-Yamamah until the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) gives his permission.” Thumamah returned to Al-Yamamah and fulfilled his oath. He forbade his people from sending any caravans bearing grains to Makkah. This led to a serious food crisis in Makkah, to the point that the Quraysh soon humbled themselves and wrote to the Prophet (PBBUH), beseeching him for help.

The Prophet (PBBUH) treated the Quraysh not as they deserved, but according to his compassionate nature, which was very considerate and respectful of kinship ties. The Prophet (PBBUH) wrote to Thumamah telling him to lift the food ban, and grains were once again carried from Al-Yamamah to Makkah.

The *Ghazwah* (Expedition) of Banu Lahyan

Banu Lahyan were the people who committed the tragic deed of Al-Raji`, in which they treacherously killed a group of the Prophet’s Companions and handed over the rest as captives to the Quraysh to kill; among them was Khubayb [whose story was detailed earlier in the book].

¹ “Here I am, O Allah, here I am. Here I am, You have no partner; here I am. Verily, all praise and blessings are Yours, and all sovereignty, You have no partner.”

The homeland of Banu Lahyan was situated deep in Hejaz, on the border of Makkah. Following the tragedy of Al-Raji`, the Prophet (PBBUH) deemed it unwise to penetrate deep into a territory too close to their major enemy, the Quraysh. But when the power of the Quraysh collapsed with the disbanding of the confederate forces, the Prophet (PBBUH) decided that it was time to avenge the betrayal and killing of his Companions at Al-Raji`.

In Jumada Al-Awwal of the year 6 A.H., the Prophet (PBBUH) set out at the head of two hundred men, after leaving Ibn Umm Maktum in charge of Madinah. He (PBBUH) used the tactic of surprise by creating the impression that he was heading towards Al-Sham region. He (PBBUH) then changed route and went to Gharan Valley [between Amaj and `Asfan], which was the location of the massacre of his Companions. There, he (PBBUH) invoked Allah for mercy and blessings upon them.

As the news of the approaching Muslim army reached Banu Lahyan, they fled to the mountains. Then, for two days, the Prophet (PBBUH) camped with his Companions in their territory and dispatched small units to pursue the fleeing troops of their tribe, but they found none. Afterwards, the Prophet (PBBUH) and his Companions rode until they reached `Usfan Valley.

Once there, the Prophet (PBBUH) commanded Abu Bakr to proceed with ten horsemen towards Makkah, with the aim of announcing their presence to the Quraysh. They reached Kura` Al-Ghamim, a place in close proximity to Makkah, and then returned to where the Prophet (PBBUH) was to begin their homeward journey to Madinah with the rest of the army.

As they were heading back home, the Prophet (PBBUH) repeated, **“(We are) returning, repenting, and praising our Lord. I seek refuge with Allah from the hardships of travel, from a gloomy appearance, and from finding that something bad has befallen family and wealth on return.”**

The *Ghazwah* (Expedition) of Dhu Al-Qarad (Also Known as Al-Ghabah)

At the beginning of Jumada Al-Thani of the year 6 A.H., just a few days after the Prophet's (PBBUH) return to Madinah from his last expedition to Banu Lahyan, a group of cavalymen from the Ghatafan tribe, led by `Uyainah ibn Hisn Al-Fazari, raided a pasture in the area of Al-Ghabah, northwest of Madinah. They seized the camels belonging to the Prophet (PBBUH), which grazed in that pasture under the charge of a shepherd from the Banu Ghifar tribe and his wife. They killed the shepherd in the attack and took his wife as a prisoner.

Upon being informed of the incident, the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) sent some swift horsemen after the Ghatafan men to prevent their escape from the area by shooting arrows at them until the Muslims could catch up with them.

The Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) headed out with a group of his Companions and caught up with the enemy's cavalry at a valley with a spring called Dhu Al-Qarad. The horsemen from the Muslim side, who arrived first at the encounter site, had already engaged with the enemy; one man was killed from the Muslim side, three from the Ghatafan side, and half the camels were retrieved.

Some Companions were keen to continue the pursuit of `Uyainah and his men and rescue the rest of the camels, but the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) advised against this course of action, knowing that `Uyainah and his group had already reached the territory of the Ghatafan tribe and entered under their protection. The Muslims were likely to encounter overwhelming numbers of the enemy and had set out unprepared for a big battle.

The Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) made camp in Dhu Al-Qarad for a day and a night, after which they departed to Madinah.

The wife of the Ghifari man, who was captured by the Ghatafan tribesmen, succeeded in escaping to Madinah on the back of one of the stolen camels. Prior to her escape, she vowed that if Allah (Exalted be He) would save her, she would

slaughter the camel upon which she escaped as a sacrifice. When she told the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) of her vow, he (PBBUH) smiled and said, “**How badly you have rewarded it (for transporting you during your escape). Will you slaughter it after Allah has provided it to you as a mount and delivered you on it! There is no vow (valid and binding), if it involves disobedience to Allah or is related to something a person does not own.**”

The *Ghazwah* (Expedition) of Banu Mustaliq (Also Known as Al-Muraysi`)

The Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) stayed in Madinah for about two months before setting out again to a water spring called Al-Muraysi`, where the Battle of Al-Mustaliq took place. This expedition was militarily insignificant; rather, its importance lay in the events that surrounded it. They first triggered unrest and confusion among the Muslim community, but ultimately contributed to the exposure of the hypocrite class and the establishment of a set of principles that specifically shaped the Muslim social identity and gave the Muslim society a character of its own: modest, noble, honorable, and pure.

Causes of the Battle

In Sha`ban 6 A.H, the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) was informed that Al-Harith ibn Dirar, the chief of Banu Al-Mustaliq, was amassing his people and other Arab tribesmen to wage war against him (PBBUH) and, in the process, assassinate him. Immediately, Buraydah ibn Al-Husaib was tasked with investigating the veracity of the news and came back to the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) confirming the report – the tribesmen of Banu Al-Mustaliq were mobilizing their forces to attack him. After consultations with his Companions, it was decided to set out quickly in a preemptive move against the upcoming planned attack. Before leaving, the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) appointed Zaid ibn Harithah (Abu Dhar according to other accounts) to administer the affairs of Madinah during his absence.

Proceeding for the Confrontation

The Prophet (PBBUH) set out with his Companions. Unlike previous undertakings, this time the Prophet (PBBUH) was accompanied by a group of hypocrites who had never joined an expedition before. They assumed the battle was an easy one, from which they could obtain some gains.

Al-Harith ibn Dirar had dispatched a spy to monitor the Muslim army, who was captured en route by the Muslim troops and killed. Then, with urgency, the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) proceeded with his army until they surprised the enemy with their arrival and encampment at Al-Muraysi`, a watering place close to Banu Al-Mustaliq.

Beginning of the Attack

Al-Harith ibn Dirar was panic-stricken when he heard of the death of his spy and the arrival of the Muslims at Al-Muraysi`. The situation was made even worse for Banu Al-Mustaliq after the Arab tribesmen, who had allied with them in this raid, ran away upon hearing the news of the advancing Muslim army.

On the other side, the Muslims were getting aligned and prepared for the fighting. The Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) lined them up and made Abu Bakr the banner bearer of Al-Muhajirun, and Sa`d ibn Ubadah the banner bearer of Al-Ansar.

Archers from both sides exchanged arrows for an hour, and then the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) gave the order to move forward and engage with the enemy. In the short battle that followed, most of the Banu Al-Mustaliq fighters fled the field. There was virtually no resistance, and the battle ended in victory for the Muslims.

Ten fighters from Banu Al-Mustaliq were killed in the fighting. Only one Muslim was mistakenly killed by an Ansari fellow Muslim, thinking he was one of the enemy. The women and children of Banu Al-Mustaliq were taken as captives, and their property and cattle were taken as booty. Among the captives

was Juwairiyah, the daughter of Al-Harith ibn Dirar, chief of Banu Al-Mustaliq. The Prophet (PBBUH) married her. Because of this marriage, the Muslims manumitted all the captives of Banu Al-Mustaliq they were holding, in honor of the new in-law relationship, and said, **“They are the in-laws of the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH).”**

The Hypocrites Inciting Clashes between Al-Ansar and Al-Muhajirun

In keeping with the custom of the victorious, after the conclusion of the battle, the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) stayed several days at Al-Muraysi` Spring. As was previously mentioned, a large faction of hypocrites, headed by `Abdullah ibn Ubai ibn Salul, joined the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) on this expedition. Their participation was neither for the sake of striving nor for stirring defeatism within the Muslim army, since they were certain of their victory. Rather, they came out, with a false pretence of belief, for the sole purpose of sharing in the gains.

The assumptions of the hypocrites proved right, and Allah (Exalted be He) bestowed victory and abundant spoils upon the Muslims. Then it happened that while the Muslims were camping at Al-Muraysi`, two men crowded each other at the spring and quarreled over drawing water. One of them, named Sinan ibn Wabr Al-Juhani, was from Al-Ansar. The other, named Jahjah ibn Mas`ud Al-Ghifari, was from Al-Muhajirun and worked as a hired worker for `Umar ibn Al-Khattab. Their two buckets became interlocked and the two men engaged in a brief fight during which Jahjah struck Sinan, causing him to bleed.

Sinan shouted out for help, “O people of Al-Ansar!” Jahjah in turn shouted out, “O people of Al-Muhajirun!” A group of men from both sides, Al-Ansar and Al-Muhajirun, came up to the area, and swords were drawn. The situation was veering out of control and could have escalated into a struggle between the Muslims, but the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) hurried to intervene as soon as he learned what was happening. Admonishingly, he (PBBUH) said to them, **“Is it with the call of *Jahiliyyah* (pre-Islamic age of ignorance) that you are calling**

out, while I am present among you? Leave it, for it is rotten (referring to tribalism, clannism, or, in a modern context, nationalism).”

The conflict subsided at once; the man who had been beaten forgave what had happened to him and the matter was thus resolved.

“When We Return to Madinah, the Honorable Will Certainly Drive Out the Mean”

However, within the internal ranks of the Muslims there was a party of men who did not want that conflict to subside. On learning of the incident at the spring, `Abdullah ibn Ubai ibn Salul vented the hatred seething within him against the Muslims. He used the quarrel that took place as an opportunity to arouse the Ansar’s anger against their Muhajirun brothers and provoke a war between them. While he was sitting with a group of his fellow tribesmen, Ibn Ubai commented, “Have they really done this? They have tried to outrank us and outnumber us in our own land? By Allah, nothing so fits us and them as the ancient saying: ‘Fatten your dog and it will devour you.’ By Allah, when we return to Madinah, indeed the more honorable (by which he was referring to himself and his fellow hypocrites) will expel therefrom the meaner (by which he was referring to the honorable Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) and the Muhajirun).”

Ibn Salul then addressed his people who were present, stating, “This is what you have done to yourselves! You allowed them to settle in your land and shared your wealth with them. By Allah, if you had withheld from them what you owned, they would have moved to a land elsewhere, other than yours.”

The Vile Remark of Ibn Ubai Reaches the Prophet (PBBUH)

Among those who heard `Abdullah ibn Ubai spewing out his hatred of the Muslims was Zaid ibn Al-Arqam. He was just a young boy, and the people took little notice of him. He was a sincere believer and was dismayed by Ibn Ubai’s derogatory remarks. He went and informed the Prophet (PBBUH) of what Ubai had said in front of several of his Companions, including both Al-Muhajirun and

Al-Ansar. `Umar ibn Al-Khattab was among those present and, in angry reaction to this, he said, “O Messenger of Allah, let me strike the neck of this hypocrite.” The Prophet (PBBUH) was a wise, far-sighted, veteran leader in all situations and under all circumstances. He replied to `Umar, **“Leave him, lest the people say that Muhammad kills his Companions.”**

Nonetheless, the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) knew that resolute action was urgently required to avert further worsening of the situation and its possible wider repercussions. Therefore, he (PBBUH) ordered that an announcement of departure be made. The people immediately started off on the journey back to Madinah at an hour that was unusual (and inconvenient) for the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) to break camp and start on the return journey. And so the people departed.

After setting forth on the journey to Madinah, the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) was met on the way by Usaid ibn Hudair, one of the noblemen and chiefs of the Ansar. He greeted the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) with the respect due to a prophet and wondered why he was traveling with his Companions at such an unusual time of the day. The Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) replied, **“Have you not heard what your companion Ibn Ubai has said? He claimed that when he returns to Madinah, the more honorable will expel therefrom the meaner.”** Usaid said, “You, by Allah, O Messenger of Allah, will expel him if you wish. By Allah, he is the inferior one, and you are the honorable one.”

Usaid went on to say, “O Messenger of Allah, be gentle with him. By Allah, Allah sent you to us while his people were stringing pearls in order to crown him (King of Madinah). So he thinks that you have dispossessed him of his kingdom.”

Ibn Ubai Denies Having Said This Vile Remark

Abdullah ibn Ubai hurriedly went to the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) once he knew that Zaid ibn Arqam had told him what he had said. Abdullah swore an oath by Allah that he had not said the words that Zaid ascribed to him, and the Ansar who were present said in sympathy and defense of him, “O Messenger of

Allah, perhaps the boy made a mistake in his account, and did not remember exactly the words the man spoke.”

The Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) accepted Ibn Ubai’s plea, yet this did not affect his decision to proceed with the return journey. He (PBBUH) traveled with the people throughout that day and night, and the morning that followed, until they became afflicted by the heat of the sun. Then, as soon as they dismounted and their bodies touched the ground, they fell asleep. This non-stop marching for almost two days was deliberate on the part of the Prophet (PBBUH); he (PBBUH) wanted to keep his troops busy so as to divert their thoughts from the words that had issued from the mouth of Ibn Ubai.

The Noble Qur’an Confirms the Account Given by Zaid

Although Zaid, the young boy, was truthful, he was discredited and received blame from the Asnar. On the other hand, Ibn Ubai swore and was believed, as he was an elderly man of respectable status among his people. Zaid experienced extreme grief such as he had never felt before until Allah (Glorified be He) revealed the following Qur’anic verses confirming the truthfulness of his account:

“They are the ones who say, ‘Spend not on those who are with the Messenger of Allah until they desert him.’ And to Allah belong the treasures of the heavens and the earth, but the hypocrites comprehend not. They (hypocrites) say, ‘If we return to Madinah, indeed the more honorable will expel therefrom the meaner.’ And to Allah belongs (all) honor, and to His Messenger, and to the believers, but the hypocrites do not know.” (Al-Munafiqun 63:7-8)

The Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) sent news to Zaid and recited these Qur’anic verses to him, then he (PBBUH) said, **“Allah has confirmed your truthfulness, O Zaid.”**

Return to Madinah and the Attitude Shown by the Son of `Abdullah ibn Ubai

The Expedition of Banu Mustaliq ended and the Muslim army returned to Madinah. The Qur'anic verses of the Chapter of Al-Munafiqun (The Hypocrites) disclosing the hypocrites' true faces were revealed, which some people believed to be more of a sentence passed on Ibn Ubai.

Upon learning of this revelation, `Abdullah, son of `Abdullah ibn Ubai, a completely different character from his father and a sincere believer, rushed to the gates of Madinah and waited for the returning troops with his sword unsheathed. People passed by him as they entered Madinah. Then, when his father Abdullah ibn Ubai approached, he stood in his way and barred him from entering, saying, "Stay back! By Allah, you shall not enter through here until the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) permits you to do so, for he is the honorable one and you are the mean one." The Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) was riding at the back of the army; when he arrived, Ibn Ubai complained to him of his son, and he (PBBUH) granted him permission to enter.

`Abdullah ibn `Abdullah ibn Ubai ibn Salul then said to the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH), "O Messenger of Allah, if you want to kill him, command me to do it. By Allah, I will bring you his head. By Allah, the people of Al-Khazraj know that there has never been among them a man more dutiful to his father than I. I am afraid that if you order someone else to do it and that person kills him, my soul will not allow me to look at the killer of my father walking around safely among the people. I fear that I would kill him, which means that I would have killed a believer in retaliation for the death of a disbeliever, and that I would enter Hellfire (as a result)."

The psychological conflict that the son of `Abdullah ibn Ubai was undergoing was clearly manifest in his words. It was a struggle between his filial piety towards his father and his true faith, and his concern for the preservation of peace and the prevention of blood feuds among the Muslims.

The Prophet (PBBUH) Pardons Ibn Ubai

After hearing the son's words, the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) soothingly said to him, **"No. Instead we will be kind and gentle with him, and we will show good companionship to him as long as he remains among us."** The Prophet (PBBUH) thus quickly put the son `Abdullah at ease and pardoned his father, although he was inciting the native inhabitants of Madinah against him and his Companions. He (PBBUH) also made a promise to always show kindness to his father.

The Prophet's (PBBUH) gentleness and pardon would prove, over time, to have a far greater effect than punishment. After this event, whenever Ibn Ubai did anything objectionable, it was his own tribesmen who admonished him, corrected him, and reminded him that his very life was a gift that the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) had given to him.

When news of how Ibn Ubai's own tribesmen were treating him reached the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH), he said, **"What do you think, O `Umar? By Allah, had I killed him the day you ordered me to kill him, many people (natives of Yathrib) would have been outraged for his sake; these same men, if I were to order them today to kill him, would do so."** `Umar replied, "By Allah, I know that what the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) orders is of greater blessing than what I order."

The Slanderous Lie against Lady `Aishah

Lady `Aishah Accompanying the Prophet (PBBUH) in the Expedition of Banu Al-Mustaliq

It was the habit of the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) that whenever he intended to set out on a long journey, he would draw lots among his wives and take with him the one upon whom the lot fell. In the Expedition of Banu Al-Mustaliq, the lot fell on his wife Lady `Aishah, and she set out in his company.

At that time, women did not eat much. They ate only enough to sustain themselves, which made them thin and lightweight. As such, Lady `Aishah was slim and light. Her presence inside the *Hawdaj* (howdah)¹ in which she rode was hardly noticeable by the men who lifted it to place it onto the camel's back. Then, taking hold of the camel's halter, they would proceed on their course. They did this every time they stopped for the camels to rest.

Following the long and exhaustive expedition of Banu Al-Mustaliq, the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) headed with his army for Madinah. The distance back to Madinah required stops in the march, so he (PBBUH) made camp for part of the night near Madinah and then gave orders for departure. The order to march forward was given, but Lady `Aishah had stepped out of the Prophet's (PBBUH) tent to answer the call of nature. The *Hawdaj* had been placed for her at the entrance of the tent, ready for her to ride therein.

Lady `Aishah Gets Delayed and Misses the Caravan

During this journey, Lady `Aishah was wearing an onyx bead necklace borrowed from her sister, Asama. Without her noticing it, the necklace slipped

¹ A carriage, usually with a canopy, carried on the back of a camel.

from her neck. When she was on her way back to the camp to depart with the army, she felt for the necklace and realized it was missing. She quickly retraced her steps and looked for the necklace until she found it.

In the meantime, the men lifted her *Hawdaj* onto the camel's back, thinking that Lady `Aishah was inside it as usual. At the time, Lady `Aishah was a young lady of light physique. Because of this, the men did not notice any difference in the weight of the *Hawdaj* while putting it on the camel's back. They just lifted it, placed it on top of the camel, and set off on their path.

When Lady `Aishah came back to the campsite, she found that everybody had gone. She calmly wrapped herself in her mantle and slept in the spot where her tent had been pitched, not doubting that her people would come back for her as soon as they discovered her absence. She preferred to remain where she was, rather than venture into the desert without a knowledgeable guide.

Lady `Aishah Is Found by Safwan and Brought back to Madinah

Lady `Aishah was lying down asleep when she was passed by Safwan ibn Al-Mu`attal, who had fallen behind the rest of the army to attend to some errand of his own. Upon noticing a sleeping figure, he stopped. Upon approaching, he recognized her as the Prophet's (PBBUH) wife, and exclaimed, "*Inna lillahi wa inna ilaihi raj`iun!*" (Truly, to Allah we belong and truly, to Him we shall return!) The wife of the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH)! What has caused you to stay behind? May Allah have mercy on you."

However, out of modesty, the Mother of the Believers¹ did not reply to him. So, he brought his camel near and stepped away until she had mounted it. He led the camel by its halter as fast as he could to catch up with the army proceeding to Madinah. They overtook them while they were taking a rest from the midday heat.

¹ Lady `Aishah, as well as all the Prophet's (PBUH) wives, held a similar status to every believer's own mother.

Immediately after Safwan came into view leading the camel upon which Lady `Aishah rode, malicious slander targeting the honor of Lady `Aishah began. The hypocrites of Madinah, led by their chief, `Abdullah ibn Ubai ibn Salul, started wielding the weapon of psychological warfare and rumors, especially since they had lost their military grip and direct, armed confrontations with the Muslims had proven useless. All these conditions combined to deal a severe blow to their determination and morale.

`Abdullah ibn Ubai ibn Salul undertook the greatest share of the slander campaign. He needed an outlet for his burning spite, resentment, and hypocrisy, and thus went around gossiping and fabricating wicked lies against Lady `Aishah.

The Slandering Talk Reaches the Prophet (PBBUH)

Apart from `Abdullah ibn Ubai ibn Salul, the mastermind and instigator of the slander campaign, some Companions believed the rumors which the hypocrites had fabricated and became involved in spreading them. They were Mistah ibn Uthathah, a maternal cousin of Abu Bakr Al-Siddiq; Hassan ibn Thabit; and Hamnah bint Jahsh, the sister of Zainab bint Jahsh, the Prophet's wife (PBBUH). As for Zainab herself, she only said good things about Lady `Aishah.

After hearing the slander and rumors swirling around, the initial reaction of the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) was to keep silent.

Lady `Aishah Falls III

No one dared inform Lady `Aishah of the issue, especially because soon after her return to Madinah, she fell ill and was confined at home for a month. During this time, she remained unaware of the rumors circulating about her. However, she felt that during this illness she was not receiving the same level of kindness and compassion from the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) that she usually received when she got sick. When he (PBBUH) came to see her while her mother was with

her looking after her, he would ask, “**How are you?**” and say nothing more. Finally, troubled by this lukewarm attitude towards her, she asked his leave to go to her family’s home to be nursed by her mother, and he (PBBUH) allowed her to go.

The Prophet (PBBUH) Is Deeply Hurting for His Wife’s Sake

The slander and defamation of character directed towards Lady `Aishah was immensely distressing to the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH). The vicious rumors accusing his honorable wife spread across the city. Although the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) maintained some degree of distance while investigating the issue, he never had any doubt in the innocence of his wife. He (PBBUH) publicly announced this to a gathering of his Companions in the mosque.

From the pulpit, the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) denounced the accusations being leveled at his wife and his Companion, Safwan, saying, **“O people, why are some men hurting me regarding my family (i.e., a polite way of saying my wife) and saying false things about them? By Allah, I know only good of them. And they speak such things about a man of whom, by Allah, I know only good and who never enters any of my houses except in my company.”**

Once the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) had finished his speech, Usaid ibn Hudair, one of the chiefs of Al-Aws, said, “O Messenger of Allah, if they (i.e., the slanderers) belong to Al-Aws, we will take care of them for you. If they belong to our brothers, Al-Khazraj, give us your command. By Allah, they deserve to have their heads struck off!” Driven by tribal partisanship, Sa`d ibn `Ubadah, the chief of Al-Khazraj, objected to his statement, saying that Usaid had only spoken thus because he knew that the slanderers were from Al-Khazraj. Had they been his tribesmen, he would not have said this. The Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) then quickly interposed and prevented the escalation of words from evolving into a fight.

Lady `Aishah Learns of the Slanderous Rumors Related to Her

Lady `Aishah moved to her mother's house to continue her healing, still knowing nothing of either the gossip being spread about her or the Prophet's (PBBUH) public defense of her. Finally, the matter was disclosed to her at the end of some twenty days of convalescence and recovery.

She went out one evening to answer the call of nature¹. Umm Mistah, the maternal aunt of Abu Bakr Al-Siddiq, was accompanying her. While walking, Umm Mistah tripped over her garment and spoke against her son Mistah, saying, "May Mistah stumble and fall." Lady `Aishah criticized her for this. At this point, Umm Mistah divulged to her what the slanderers had been saying about her.

Incredulous, Lady `Aishah asked, "Has this really happened?" Umm Mistah affirmed it, saying, "By Allah, it really has happened." Lady `Aishah took the news so badly that she broke down, crying incessantly until she thought her liver would burst.

The Prophet (PBBUH) Consults His Companions

During this period, no divine revelation came down to settle the gossip, so the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) summoned `Ali ibn Abu Talib and Usamah ibn Zaid to consult their opinion. Usamah spoke in praise of Lady `Aishah, saying, "O Messenger of Allah, they are your family, and we know nothing but good of them. This is lying and falsehood!" As for `Ali, he said, "O Messenger of Allah, women are many and you can replace her with another wife. And if you ask her maidservant, she will tell you the truth."

So, the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) sent for Barirah to question her. Her reply was, "By Allah, I know only good of her. I have no fault to find with her except that when I am kneading dough and I bid her watch it, she will fall asleep and her lamb will come and eat it."

¹ This was according to the custom of Arab people at the time, as they did not have privies inside their houses. Their practice was to go out to relieve themselves in the open space outside Madinah.

The Prophet (PBBUH) Asks Lady `Aishah Directly

Left with no other choice, the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) went to see his honorable wife, Lady `Aishah, and put the question directly to her. She had been crying ceaselessly for two nights and a day without sleep. Both of her parents were with her, and an Ansari woman who sat at her side weeping along with her.

After seating himself, the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) thanked and praised Allah and then said, “*Amma ba`d*¹ (thereafter) O `Aishah, I have been informed such-and-such about you; if you are innocent, Allah will soon reveal your innocence. And if you have committed a sin, ask Allah for forgiveness and repent to Him; for when a servant (of Allah) confesses his sin and then repents to Allah, Allah accepts his repentance.”

In the face of Such Overwhelming Hardship, Lady `Aishah Opts for Patience

When the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) had finished what he had to say, Lady `Aishah’s tears stopped completely; she no longer felt even one drop flowing. She expected her parents to answer the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) on her behalf, but neither of them spoke.

She asked them, “Will you not answer the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH)?” They both said, “By Allah, we do not know what to say to the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH).” When she saw that her parents remained silent, the tears welled up in her eyes again, and she said, “By Allah, I will never repent to Allah of what you made mention of. By Allah, I know that if I were to admit to what people say, while Allah knows that I am innocent of it, I would be affirming something that did not happen. And if I were to refute what they say, you would not believe me. Rather, I will say, as did the father of Yusuf (Prophet Joseph, PBBUH): ‘So beautiful patience (i.e., one without complaint or disquietude) is most fitting (for

¹ An expression for separating an introductory part of speech, which is devoted to Allah’s praises and glorification, from the rest, and starting to speak on the main topic. (Islamic Encyclopedia)

me). And it is Allah (alone) Whose Help is sought against that (lie) which you describe.' (Yusuf 12:18)"

Lady `Aishah continued to narrate her feelings in the following words: "Then I turned away and lay down on my bed, hoping that Allah would prove my innocence. By Allah, I never thought that Allah (the Majestic and Glorious) would send down Divine Revelation concerning my situation, as I considered myself too insignificant to be talked of in the Holy Qur'an. But I hoped that the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) would see a vision in which Allah would declare my innocence."

Divine Revelations Come Down Confirming the Innocence of Lady `Aishah

Soon after Lady `Aishah finished her words, and before the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) left his sitting place, the divine revelation came to him. He (PBBUH) started perspiring and his body felt heavy, as always befell him whenever he was being divinely inspired. He (PBBUH) was covered with his garment and a leather cushion was placed beneath his head. When the state of receiving the divine revelation was over, the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) was smiling. He (PBBUH) sat upright. Drops of sweat were falling from him like silver beads, though it was a (cold) wintry day. He wiped the sweat off his forehead and said, "**Rejoice, O `Aishah! Allah has revealed your innocence.**" `Aishah's mother said to her, "Get up and go to him." `Aishah replied, "By Allah, I will not go to him and I will not thank anyone except Allah."

Then the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) went out to the mosque, where he (PBBUH) recited to the assembled Muslims the Qur'anic verses just revealed, declaring the innocence of Lady `Aishah.

The Qur'anic verses affirming the innocence of Lady `Aishah were as follows:

“Verily, those who brought forth the slander are a group among you. Consider it not a bad thing for you. Nay, it is good for you. Unto every man among them will be paid that which he had earned of the sin, and as for him among them who had the greater share therein, his will be a great torment.

Why, then, did not the believers, men and women, when you heard it (the slander), think good of their own people and say, ‘This (charge) is an obvious lie?’

Why did they not produce four witnesses? Since they (the slanderers) have not produced witnesses! Then with Allah they are the liars.

Had it not been for the Grace of Allah and His Mercy unto you in this world and in the Hereafter, a great torment would have touched you for that whereof you had spoken.

When you were propagating it with your tongues, and uttering with your mouths that whereof you had no knowledge, you counted it a little thing, while with Allah it was very great.

And why did you not, when you heard it, say, ‘It is not right for us to speak of this. Glory be to You (O Allah); this is a great lie.’

Allah forbids you from it and warns you not to repeat the like of it forever, if you are believers.

And Allah makes the *Ayat* (proofs, evidence, verses, lessons, signs, revelations) plain to you, and Allah is All-Knowing, All-Wise.

Verily, those who like that (the crime of) illegal sexual intercourse should be propagated among those who believe, they will have a painful torment in this world and in the Hereafter. And Allah knows and you know not.

And had it not been for the Grace of Allah and His Mercy on you, (Allah would have hastened the punishment upon you). And that Allah is full of kindness, Most Merciful.” (Al-Nur 24:11-20)

In compliance with the divine injunction contained in the exonerating Qur’anic verses, the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) ordered punishment for the

slanderers, eighty lashes to each of the two males and one female from among the Muslims who spread the defamation.

Applying the Prescribed Penalty for Launching False Charges of *Zina* against Chaste Women

On this occasion was also revealed the ordained punishment for falsely accusing a chaste person of involvement in *Zina* (sexual intercourse outside marriage). The Qur'anic verse in this respect stated: “And those who accuse chaste women, and produce not four witnesses, flog them with eighty lashes, and reject their testimony forever; they indeed are the defiantly disobedient (to Allah).” (Al-Nur 24:4)

In implementation of the punishment prescribed by the Qur'an, the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) ordered that Mistah ibn Uthathah, Hassan ibn Thabit, and Hamnah bint Jahsh should receive the legal penalty of eighty lashes for committing slander.

`Abdullah ibn Ubai, the mastermind of this vicious lie who played the major part in the slander campaign, was excluded from the penalty of flogging. The reason was possibly because the prescribed penalty was essentially an expiation and purification that would remit further punishment in the Hereafter, whereas Ibn Ubai did not deserve this. As stated in the Qur'anic verse Al-Nur 24:11, there would be a painful punishment in store for him in the Hereafter and that was enough, without any other punishment. Or the reason could have been that it served the same public interest for which he was not punished in the previous offence. Moreover, after this transgression, Ibn Ubai became the object of intense reproach and indignation from his people and lived in isolation, after his real motives became unequivocally clear to all the Muslim community.

The Beauty of Forgiveness

After Allah declared the innocence of Lady `Aishah, Abu Bakr, who previously provided financial support for Mistah ibn Uthathah, a poor relative of

his, swore to cut off this support due to his participation in spreading the false allegations against Lady `Aishah. Concerning this, Allah (Exalted be He) then revealed:

“Let not those among you who are blessed with graces and wealth swear not to give (any sort of help) to their kinsmen, the poor, and the emigrants for Allah’s Cause. Let them pardon and forgive. Do you not love that Allah should forgive you? And Allah is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful.” (Al-Nur 24:22)

In response, Abu Bakr said, “Yes, by Allah, I love that Allah should forgive me.” He continued his financial support for Mistah, and added, “By Allah, I will never withhold it from him.”

The Treaty of Al-Hudaibiyah

The Yearning of the Muslims for the Sacred House

Six years had elapsed since the emigration of the Messenger Muhammad (PBBUH) and his Companions from Makkah to Madinah. During this time, the Muslims felt strong yearnings to visit the Sacred Mosque – the *Qiblah* (Ka`bah-direction faced in prayer) which the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) was ordered to face in place of Al-Aqsa Mosque in Jerusalem.

One morning, during a gathering, the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) informed his Companions of a true vision he had seen, in which he and his Companions entered the Sacred Mosque and circumambulated the Ka`bah by Allah's Will. They felt secure and had no fear; some had their heads shaved, and others had their head hair cut short as part of the rituals for performing `Umrah (minor pilgrimage to Makkah).

No sooner had the Companions heard the Prophet's (PBBUH) vision than all voices were raised in jubilant praise and thanks to Allah. Following this vision, they believed in this same year they would enter Makkah and perform `Umrah, and so everyone started preparing themselves for the blessed journey to Makkah.

Encouraging Neighboring Arabs to Join the Pilgrimage Journey

The Prophet (PBBUH) encouraged the Muslims in Madinah to set out with him, and he (PBBUH) also invited the Muslim and non-Muslim Arabs and Bedouins living in neighboring districts of Madinah to accompany him on his pilgrimage.

With the participation of other Arabs, the Quraysh would be left with no reason to bar him from entry or fight against him. The Ka`bah, according to all Arabs, was not the private property of the Quraysh; as such, they had no right to

prevent anyone from visiting the Holy Mosque and performing pilgrimage, even if the visitor had strained relations with them.

Many of the Arabs were slow in responding to the Prophet's (PBBUH) invitation; but as for the Prophet (PBBUH) himself, he washed his clothes, mounted his camel Al-Qasqwa`, and set out with his wife Umm Salamah on the 1st of Dhul-Qa`dah of the year 6 A.H. at the head of fourteen hundred of his Companions from both communities, Al-Muhajirun and Al-Ansar. They carried only sheathed swords, which was part of a traveler's dress code, and took with them seventy sacrificial camels as a proclamation of their objective to only visit and venerate the Sacred House, without any intention of fighting.

Marching Out Towards Makkah

The Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) set forth with his Companions towards Makkah. Upon reaching Dhul-Hulaifah, he (PBBUH) ordered that the sacrificial animals be garlanded and marked as offerings to be made during the pilgrimage. Then he (PBBUH) and his Companions entered the state of *Ihram* (the ritual state for Hajj and `Umrah) and clothed themselves in their pilgrim's garments.

Some sixty kilometers north of Makkah, at a place called `Usfan, the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) was met by a tribesman of Banu Ka`b named Bishr ibn Sufyan Al-Ka`bi, who informed him that the Quraysh, having heard of his journey, had come out against him with their weapons and were now encamped at Dhi-Tuwa. They swore an oath by Allah that he (PBBUH) would never enter Makkah against their will. They even dispatched in advance Khalid ibn Al-Walid and two hundred horsemen to the valley of Kura` Al-Ghamim on the main route to Makkah.

In reply to him, the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) said, "***Wayha* (an expression of compassion and pity) Quraysh! They have been consumed by war. What would they lose if they cleared the way between me and the other Arabs? If they (Arabs other than the Quraysh) defeat me, they (the Quraysh)**

will have what they wanted. And if Allah grants me victory over them, they (the Quraysh) will enter Islam abundantly; or, if they do not, they can fight, having regained their strength. What do the Quraysh think? By Allah, I shall keep on striving for the sake of that which Allah has sent me with until Allah makes it (His Religion) prevail, or this neck gets separated (i.e., I die in the endeavor).”

The Prophet (PBBUH) Favors Peace and a Solution

As the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) was pondering the issues likely to arise, the Makkan horsemen started appearing on the horizon. This made it clear to the Muslims that it was impossible for them to realize their aim of visiting the Ka`bah without first penetrating the lines of the Quraysh and engaging in a battle with them, in which the outcome would be in their adversary’s favor. Moreover, fighting during the Inviolable Months¹ would make the Muslims blameworthy in the minds of the rest of the Arabs.

But the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) was too wise and farsighted to pursue such a course. He (PBBUH) remained steadfast to the policy of peace and asked his Companions to suggest a little-used pathway to Makkah, away from the main path currently blocked by the Quraysh. He (PBBUH) said, **“Who is the man who will lead us along a way other than the one on which they are?”** A man from the Aslam tribe responded, and he led them along a rugged passage between valleys and mountain passes until they emerged into level land at Al-Hudaibiyah, some twenty kilometers northwest of Makkah.

When the cavalry of the Quraysh, under the leadership of Khalid ibn Al-Walid, noticed that the Muslims had escaped them and were getting close to Makkah, they galloped back to their people to apprise them of the change in the situation and join the defense of Makkah in case of any attack by the Muslims.

¹ Dhul-Qa`dah, Dhul-Hijjah, Muharram, and Rajab.

Al-Qaswa' Is Stopped from Advancing Just as Allah Stopped Abraha's Elephant

The Prophet (PBBUH) and his Companions proceeded on their way. When they reached Al-Murar mountainous pass, leading down to Al-Hudaibiyah situated below Makkah, the Prophet's (PBBUH) camel, Al-Qaswa', knelt down. The people tried in vain to make it get up. They said, "Al-Qaswa' has become stubborn!" The Prophet (PBBUH) replied, **"Al-Qaswa' has not become stubborn. That is not its nature; it has been stopped by Him Who stopped the (Abraha's) elephant (from entering Makkah). By Him in Whose Hand is my soul, whatever plan the Quraysh propose to me, asking me thereby to maintain the ties of kinship, I shall grant it to them."**

The Prophet (PBBUH) then prodded Al-Qaswa' and it jumped up. He (PBBUH) then ordered that the march be resumed, and that they should start the descent into the valley, but his Companions replied, "O Messenger of Allah, there is no water in the valley to descend to!" The Prophet (PBBUH) responded by taking an arrow out of his quiver and giving it to one of his Companions. He (PBBUH) asked him to insert it in one of the old wells scattered about the valley, and the water flowed profusely. The people quenched their thirst, watered their camels to their satisfaction, and camped there in peace.

Negotiations Start

The Prophet's (PBBUH) successful action to avoid clashes with the Qurayshi horsemen, and his steadfastness in keeping matters peaceful, greatly influenced the attitude and subsequent response of the Quraysh. They became convinced that he (PBBUH) had no intention of fighting. That made them hesitate. Finally, after discussing the alternatives among themselves, they decided that there was no way out of the present predicament except through negotiations. They began sending envoys, one after the other, to negotiate with the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) and dissuade him from entering Makkah. The delegates representing the Quraysh were as follows:

1. Budail ibn Warqa' Al-Khuza`i

Along with some of his clansmen from the Khuza`ah tribe, Budail ibn Warqa' Al-Khuza`i went to see the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) and enquire into the motives of his visit. The Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) answered that they had come as pilgrims and visitors of the Sacred House and had not come for war.

After being assured of the reason behind the Prophet's (PBBUH) visit, the delegates returned with the intention of persuading the Quraysh not to debar the Prophet (PBBUH) and his followers from visiting the Ka`bah. When they arrived, they conveyed his words to the Quraysh who replied, with great haughtiness, "Even if he is not coming for war, by Allah, he shall never enter against our will, nor shall the Arabs ever talk about this (happening) in relation to us."

2. Mikraz ibn Hafs

The Quraysh sent another envoy named Mikraz ibn Hafs. On seeing him, the Prophet (PBBUH) described him as a treacherous man. He (PBBUH) answered him with the same words he had said to Budail and gave him the same message to communicate to the Quraysh.

3. Al-Hulais ibn `Alqamah

Afterwards, the Quraysh sent Al-Hulais ibn `Alqamah, the chief of Al-Ahabish (mixed clans of different origins allied with the Quraysh) and a member of the Kinanah tribe. When he came in sight of the Muslim camp, the Prophet (PBBUH) said to his Companions, "**This is so and so. He is from a people who venerate sacrificial camels.**"

He (PBBUH) ordered his Companions to send out the sacrificial animals in front of him so that he could see for himself tangible proof of their pure intention to pay honor to the Sacred House. The people thus went out to meet him, shouting *Talbiyah* (devotional expressions chanted during Hajj and `Umrah), and driving before them the sacrificial camels, garlanded and ready for sacrifice. Al-Hulais was greatly moved by what he saw and heard, and said, "Glorified be

Allah! These people should not be barred from Allah's House." Al-Hulais went back to the Quraysh before he even reached the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) and conversed with him. He relayed to the Quraysh what he had seen, which only exasperated them more, and they clung tenaciously to their inhibiting attitude towards the Muslims. Al-Hulais became infuriated at them and said, "O people of the Quraysh, it was not for this that I made an alliance with you! And it was not for this that I made a covenant with you!" Al-Ahabish had a mutual defense contract with the Quraysh during wartime.

He then continued to say, "Will someone coming to glorify Allah's Sacred House be turned away from it? By Him in Whose Hand is the soul of Al-Hulais, you shall stop getting in the way between Muhammad and what he has come for, otherwise I shall depart with all Al-Ahabish like one single man." The Quraysh feared the possible consequences of Al-Hulais' anger, and so they tried to pacify him by asking for some time to reconsider the solutions.

4. `Urwah ibn Mas`ud Al-Thaqafi

The Quraysh then thought of deputing a man of trusted wise counsel. That man was `Urwah ibn Mas`ud Al-Thaqafi, the chief of Al-Ta`if. He met with the Prophet (PBBUH) and tried to dissuade him from entering Makkah by making him aware of his precarious situation. He said to him, "O Muhammad, have you gathered a motley group of people and brought them to your own tribesmen and kindred to destroy them with? The Quraysh have set out pledging to Allah that you will never enter it (Makkah) against their will. By Allah, I think these people (meaning the Prophet's Companions) will flee and abandon you in the future." Upon hearing the malicious insult made by `Urwah, Abu Bakr furiously insulted him and silenced him, saying, "Would we flee and abandon him (as you claim)?"

In the course of the talks, `Urwah began to hold the Prophet's (PBBUH) beard while he was speaking to him. This angered Al-Mughirah bin Shu`bah, `Urwah's maternal nephew, who stood guard directly over the head of the

Prophet (PBBUH). Al-Mughirah held a sword in his hand, and whenever `Urwah extended his hand to grab the Prophet's beard, Al-Mughirah hit his hand with the butt of his sword and said, "Draw back your hand from the beard of the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) before it does not return to you (i.e., before you lose it)."

`Urwah heard nothing new other than the same words and the same message that the Prophet (PBBUH) had delivered to the previous envoys of the Quraysh; that he had not come to fight but to make pilgrimage. `Urwah left the Prophet (PBBUH) deeply impressed by the loyalty and the highly dignified treatment the Prophet (PBBUH) was receiving from his Companions. He returned to the Quraysh and reported the impressions of his visit to them, saying, "O people of the Quraysh, I have been to Kisra (Khosrow) in his kingdom and Caesar in his kingdom and the Negus in his kingdom, yet, by Allah, never have I seen a king (being honored and revered) among his people like Muhammad is among his Companions. They will never forsake him for anything. He has offered you a reasonable proposal, so accept it."

A Final Attempt by the Quraysh

While the negotiations proceeded, about forty armed men from the Quraysh came down stealthily at night from Al-Tan'im Mount to Al-Hudaibiyah and tried to infiltrate the Muslim camp and produce intentional skirmishes that might trigger the fuse of war and hinder the negotiations. Their design failed. They were captured by Muhammad bin Maslamah, the chief of the Muslim guards, with the help of his group, and brought to the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH). He (PBBUH) pardoned them all and set them free in clear demonstration of his desire for reconciliation and peace.

The Delegates of the Prophet (PBBUH) to the Quraysh

As the negotiations became prolonged, the Prophet (PBBUH) considered the possibility that the delegates sent by the Quraysh were not effective and bold

enough in convincing the Quraysh of the reason behind his visit. So, he sent from his side Kharash ibn Umayyah to inform the Quraysh of his peaceful intentions to solely honor Makkah and visit its sanctuary. He (PBBUH) gave him his camel, named Al-Tha`lab. Kharash ibn Umayyah mounted the camel and rode off to Makkah to convey the Prophet's (PBBUH) message to the Quraysh. However, he was given no opportunity to speak. As soon as he entered Makkah, the Quraysh killed his camel and wanted to kill him on the spot. They were prevented from doing so by some men from Al-Ahabish.

The Quraysh's mistreatment of the Prophet's (PBBUH) delegates was a clear indication of the spirit of animosity and intolerance that pervaded them and their actions. In contrast, the Prophet (PBBUH) exercised patience and restraint in the face of such acts of provocation and maintained his consistent policy of favoring peace. In turn, this removed every pretext the Quraysh made up to excuse their violence against the Muslims. As was now obvious to all the Arabs, the Prophet (PBBUH) was anxious for peace and not war, as the Quraysh had falsely claimed. Any attack by them on the Muslims would be looked upon by the Arabs as unjust, unwarranted, and unprovoked. If they attacked, the Muslims would have every right to stop their aggression with all their might.

Uthman Acts as the Prophet's (PBBUH) Envoy

Time passed, and the situation remained unchanged, with neither party willing to cede their position. The Quraysh refused to back down from their stance and pave the way for a deal, and the Muslims refused to return without performing `Umrah. To help move the situation forward in a positive way, the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) decided to send one of his major Companions to explain the purpose of his visit to the dignitaries of the Quraysh. At first, he (PBBUH) chose `Umar ibn Al-Khattab, but he excused himself from going and gave the following reason, "O Messenger of Allah, there is none in Makkah from Banu `Adi who will become angry for my sake (i.e., defend me) if I am harmed, especially as the Quraysh know of my hostility and toughness towards them. But

I can recommend to you a man who is more honored and protected in Makkah than I am: `Uthman ibn `Affan. His clan is still in Makkah and he will convey what you want.”

The Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) summoned `Uthman ibn `Affan to dispatch him to the Quraysh on this mission. He (PBBUH) said to `Uthman, **“Tell them we have not come to fight; rather, we have come to perform `Umrah, and call them to Islam.”** He (PBBUH) also ordered `Uthman to go to the weak believers, men and women, still living in Makkah and give them the tidings of the (Coming) Conquest of Makkah, and that the Almighty Allah would manifest His Religion in Makkah, so that belief would no longer be concealed.

`Uthman Inside Makkah

`Uthman left for Makkah. As he was about to enter it, he was met by Aban ibn Sa`id ibn Al-`As Al-Amawi, who took him under his protection until he could deliver the Prophet’s (PBBUH) message he had been entrusted with. `Uthman went to the chiefs of the Quraysh and informed them of the Prophet’s (PBBUH) message; that he (PBBUH) had not come to wage war but to visit the Ka`bah and glorify its sanctities. After delivering his message, the Quraysh offered to let him circumambulate the Ka`bah, but he declined their offer, saying that he would not do so until the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) had circumambulated it first.

Spreading of Rumors about `Uthman’s Death

The discussions between `Uthman and the dignitaries of the Quraysh lasted a long time. As a result, this lengthened the time `Uthman spent in Makkah. Perhaps, during that time, a middle ground was being sought to break the impasse between the Quraysh’s sworn oath not to allow the Muslims to enter Makkah that year, and the Muslims’ keenness to visit the Sacred House and

perform `Umrah. Because of this delay, rumors began circulating among the Muslims that `Uthman had been killed.

Al-Ridwan Pledge

Rumors about the killing of `Uthman aroused the alarm of the Muslims. When they reached the ears of Messenger Muhammad (PBBUH), he took a decisive position, since in that era slaying of ambassadors was tantamount to a declaration of war. He (PBBUH) said, **“We shall not depart until we fight the people (the Quraysh).”**

The Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) called his Companions to pledge allegiance to him. He (PBBUH) stood under a tree and the taking of the pledge was carried out. All the Companions pledged that they would not flee the battlefield (if a battle broke out with the Quraysh) and would keep on fighting firmly and steadfastly to the last man (although they were armed only with a traveler’s weapon).

After everybody had taken the pledge, the Prophet (PBBUH) placed his right hand on his left hand and took the allegiance pledge on behalf of `Uthman. **“This is on behalf of `Uthman,”** he (PBBUH) said, as if `Uthman was present with them. This pledge was called the Pledge of Al-Ridwan (the Pledge of Earning Allah’s Good Pleasure). Regarding it, Allah revealed His Saying:

“Indeed, Allah was pleased with the believers when they pledged allegiance to you (O Prophet) under the tree. He knew what was in their hearts, so He sent down tranquility upon them and rewarded them with a near victory.” (Al-Fath 48:18)

The Return of `Uthman

The Muslims had just finished taking the pledge of allegiance when news came to the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) that the report about `Uthman was false. Shortly thereafter, `Uthman arrived and joined them at their camp. He then

informed the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) of the attitude adopted by the Quraysh.

Al-Hudaibiyah Treaty and Its Terms

The Quraysh realized the seriousness of the situation when they heard about Al-Ridwan Pledge, and decided it was time to negotiate a truce with the Prophet (PBBUH). For this purpose, they sent Suhail ibn `Amr as their delegate. They instructed him to make peace on the condition that the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) leave Makkah and not perform pilgrimage this year. This was to preserve their prestige in the region, so that the Arabs would not say that he (PBBUH) had entered Makkah against their will.

When Suhail came into view, the Prophet (PBBUH) said, **“The matter has been made easy for you. The people want to reconcile by sending this man (to negotiate on their behalf).”** Suhail arrived and began negotiations with the Prophet (PBBUH). At the end of a long and difficult series of talks, the following terms of peace were agreed upon:

First, the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) must leave without performing `Umrah that year. He should come to Makkah the following year, when he and his Companions would be allowed access to the city after the Quraysh had vacated it for them. They would stay for three days, bearing no weapons except sheathed swords.

Second, war between both parties should be suspended for a ten-year period. During this time, people would live safely and refrain from all acts of hostility against each another. Accordingly, Muslims could come safely and securely to Makkah, and the Quraysh could cross over safely and securely with their trade to Al-Sham (Greater Syria or the Levant) and other regions, without war or fighting taking place.

Third, anyone (third party) who wished to enter into an agreement or covenant with Muhammad (PBBUH) could do so. Likewise, anyone (third party)

who wished to enter into an agreement or covenant with the Quraysh could do so. Any tribe that joined either of the two parties would be regarded as part of it. Consequently, any act of aggression made against that tribe would be deemed as an attack on the relevant party.

Fourth, if anyone from the Quraysh converted to Islam and went to Madinah to join the Prophet (PBBUH), (i.e., as a fugitive), without his guardian's permission, Muhammad (PBBUH) must send him back to the Quraysh. However, should any of Muhammad's (PBBUH) followers in Madinah decide to return to Makkah and revert to polytheism, the Quraysh would not send him back to Muhammad (PBBUH).

Writing Down the Terms of the Treaty

After the terms of the treaty were settled upon, the process of committing it to writing began. The Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) summoned `Ali ibn Abu Talib and began dictating to him the wording of the agreement. He (PBBUH) ordered him to open it with the words: **“In the Name of Allah, Al-Rahman (the All-Merciful), Al-Rahim (the Ever-Merciful)”** Suhail objected immediately, saying, “We do not know Al-Rahman (the All-Merciful). Instead, write: ‘In Your Name, O Allah.’” The Prophet (PBBUH) agreed and ordered `Ali to write it as Suhail requested.

The Prophet (PBBUH) then went on to dictate the conditions of the treaty, saying, **“Write: This is what Muhammad, the Messenger of Allah, has agreed upon with Suhail ibn `Amr.”** Hearing this, Suhail again objected, “If we had known that you are the Messenger of Allah, we would not have prevented you from the House nor fought against you. Instead, write: Muhammad ibn (son of) `Abdullah.”

The Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) replied, **“By Allah, I am the Messenger of Allah even if you deny me.”** He (PBBUH) asked `Ali to erase ‘the Messenger of Allah’ and to write instead ‘Muhammad ibn `Abdullah.’ `Ali refused to erase the Prophet's (PBBUH) title from the text of the agreement. So, the Prophet

(PBBUH) asked `Ali to point out to him its place on the document, and he (PBBUH) erased the words himself.

The writing of the treaty was finalized with the witness of both Muslim and polytheist men. Among the Muslims who witnessed the treaty were Abu Bakr Al-Saddiq, `Umar ibn Al-Khattab, `Abdul-Rahman ibn Awf, `Ali ibn Abu Talib, the scribe of the treaty, and some other major Companions.

Implementation of the Reconciliation Provisions

Soon after the signing of the treaty, the Khuz`ah tribe declared they would join the pact of the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH), and Banu Bakr declared they would join the pact of the Quraysh.

Abu Jandal, the Muslim Son of Suhail ibn `Amr

Before the ink had time to dry on the treaty contract, Abu Jandal, the Muslim son of Suhail ibn `Amr (the spokesman and representative of the Quraysh in the agreement), suddenly appeared on the scene, hobbling towards them in his chains. He had managed to escape from Makkah and made it all the way to the Muslim camp at Al-Hudaibiyah. Upon approaching, he threw himself among the Muslims. He had been tortured, chained, and locked up by Suhail, his father, when he learned that his son had embraced Islam.

For Abu Jandal, this was a moment of triumph and opportunity; he had finally managed to escape from his captors and flee to the Prophet (PBBUH). But once Suhail saw Abu Jandal, he went up to him, struck him on the face, and grabbed him by the front of his garment. He kept pulling and dragging his son Abu Jandal to return him to the Quraysh.

Pursuant to the treaty, any Makkan who attempted to become Muslim and flee to the Prophet (PBBUH) must be returned to Makkah. So Suhail demanded from the Prophet (PBBUH) that his son's plea for refuge be rejected and he be the first person returned to the Quraysh, in fulfilment of the commitments of the just-concluded reconciliation.

Abu Jandal started yelling at the top of his voice, “O Muslims, shall I be returned to the polytheists for them to lure me away from my religion?” His screams caused the Companions great distress. This was the first test for the reconciliation and put it at risk. However difficult and painful the situation was, the Prophet (PBBUH) returned Abu Jandal and consoled him with the words, **“O Abu Jandal, be patient and hope for reward from Allah (from the hardships you are enduring). Allah will surely grant you and the oppressed (Muslims) with you relief and a way out. We have concluded a reconciliation between us and these people. We gave one another a pledge by Allah (that we will be faithful to the terms of our agreement). We cannot betray them.”**

Dissatisfaction of the Muslims with the Treaty and the Strong Reaction of `Umar

The mood of the Muslims regarding Al-Hudaibiyah Treaty was one of disapproval and disappointment. The Muslims had marched out of Madinah without having the least doubt of entering Makkah and performing `Umrah based on the vision of the Prophet (PBBUH); but according to the clauses of the treaty, they must return this year without even having entered Makkah.

They were also particularly angry about the clause which compelled them to return anyone coming over to them as a Muslim from the Quraysh, while the Quraysh were not bound to return any Muslim who had crossed over to their side. The handing over of Abu Jandal was painfully witnessed by all of them. All these factors made the treaty appear to them to be in favor of the Quraysh.

Some of the Companions who were overwhelmed with grief began to voice their opposition. `Umar ibn Al-Khattab, who was the most grieved of all, came to the Prophet (PBBUH) and said, “O Messenger of Allah, are we not in the right and they (the disbelievers) in the wrong?”

The Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) replied, **“Yes.”**

`Umar said, “Are not our killed ones in Paradise and theirs in Hellfire?”

The Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) replied, **“Yes.”**

ʿUmar continued, “Then why should we accept that which is disadvantageous to our religion, and go back before Allah judges between us and them?”

He (PBBUH) replied, **“O Ibn Al-Khattab! I am the Messenger of Allah, and I do not disobey Him, and He will make me victorious.”**

ʿUmar asked, “Did you not tell us that we would go to the House (the Kaʿbah) and circumambulate it?”

He (PBBUH) replied, **“Yes,”** and followed by asking him, **“But did I tell you that it would be this year?”**

ʿUmar replied, “No.” The Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) then assured him, saying, **“Indeed, you will go to it and circumambulate it.”**

ʿUmar then went to Abu Bakr and asked him the same questions he had asked the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH). Abu Bakr answered him exactly as the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) had answered him, and moreover said, “O ʿUmar, stick to what he (PBBUH) says, for I testify that he is the Messenger of Allah.” ʿUmar said, “And I, too, testify that he (PBBUH) is the Messenger of Allah.”

As for the rest of the Muslims, sadness was the prevailing feeling among them. After the terms of the treaty were finalized and written down and it became a fact that the Muslims would not be performing ʿUmrah this year, the Prophet (PBBUH) gave his Companions the instructions, **“Arise (all of you), slaughter (the sacrificial animals your brought), and shave (your heads),”** in order to exit from the state of being pilgrims.

Nevertheless, despite hearing the Prophet’s (PBBUH) command repeated three times, none of the Companions stood up. When no one stood up, the Prophet (PBBUH) arose and went inside the tent of his wife, Umm Salamah. He (PBBUH) recounted to her the attitude he had encountered from the people, and

she consoled him with the following practical solution, “O Prophet of Allah, go out and do not speak a word to any of them until you have slaughtered your sacrificial camel and summoned your barber to shave your head.”

The Prophet (PBBUH) did as Umm Salamah advised him. He (PBBUH) went out, slaughtered his sacrificial camel, and had his head shaved without speaking a single word to his Companions. When they saw what he (PBBUH) had done, they all rose, slaughtered their sacrificial camels, and shaved one another’s heads. The Prophet (PBBUH) then supplicated Allah for them.

A Manifest Victory

Nothing remained for the Muslims to do except return to Madinah and wait for the next Hajj season when they would be allowed access to Makkah. The idea of going back without visiting the Ka`bah was very hard to swallow for all of them. It was only mitigated by the knowledge that the Prophet (PBBUH) had commanded them to do so. Then, after leaving Al-Hudaibiyah and while on the way from Makkah to Madinah, at a place called Kura` Al-Ghamim, the Chapter of Al-Fath (The Victory) was revealed to the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH), and he recited it to his Companions:

“Verily, We (Allah) have given you (O Muhammad) a manifest victory. That Allah may forgive you your sins of the past and the future, and complete His Favor on you, and guide you on the Straight Path; and that Allah may aid you with a mighty victory.” (Al-Fath 48:1-3)

Through the Chapter of Al-Fath, Almighty Allah confirmed that Al-Hudaibiyah Treaty was not a concession; rather, it was a triumph. This brought immense joy and peace and hope to the Companions and left them confident that victory was coming.

On hearing the glad tidings contained in the Qur’anic verses, `Umar asked, “O Messenger of Allah, is it a victory?” and he (PBBUH) asserted, “Yes.” `Umar felt very content. He regretted his previous reaction and later tried keenly to

expiate for it. He said, “I kept on giving in charity, fasting, praying, and freeing slaves to expiate for the words I said on that day until I hoped it would be (ultimately) good (for me because it made me perform many good deeds).”

The Remarkable Outcomes of Al-Hudaibiyah Treaty

Al-Hudaibiyah Treaty was, without question, a manifest victory. As time had proved, it had profound political wisdom, achieved through the Prophet’s (PBBUH) farsightedness and unbreakable determination to make peace. This brought about great impacts on Islam and the future of all Arabs.

Among the most significant results of the reconciliation pact were the following:

1. Accepting to make peace constituted in itself a recognition by the Quraysh of the Muslim State in Madinah as an entity in its own right. Customarily, a treaty is concluded between two equal opponents with equal power, in which each of the two parties accepts and acknowledges the existence and validity of the other. The moment the Quraysh signed this pact, they no longer viewed the Prophet (PBBUH) as a rebel or a dissident, but as their equal. Moreover, their acceptance of peace with the Prophet (PBBUH) was not only a sign, but also a confession of their failure to destroy him and an acknowledgement of the Muslim power in the region.
2. Acquiescing to the right of the Muslims to visit the Ka`bah and perform the rituals of pilgrimage, even if the following year, was an admission by the Quraysh that Islam had become an approved and legitimate religion and creed in the Peninsula.
3. Observing a truce for a ten-year period yielded the following results:
 - a. It gave the Muslims the peace and security they needed to introduce and spread Islam and its teachings. The cessation of conflicts and subsequent peace allowed people to begin to intermingle and converse freely, which paved the way for a fair chance to hear about and discuss Islam. No fair-

mindful person to whom Islam was presented at the time of the truce failed to accept it. Consequently, in the two years following Al-Hudaibiyah Treaty, Islam spread widely and quickly, with more people entering Islam than ever before. In those two years alone, the number of people who embraced Islam was equal to the number of all those who had become Muslim prior to that time, doubling its numbers.

This testifies to the fact that, with respect to the Muslims, the aim of these wars and battles was not to compel people to embrace Islam, but rather to provide them with the privilege to practice freedom of religion and freely choose whether or not to enter Islam. The Qur'an states it thus: "And say, 'The truth is from your Lord.' Then whosoever wills, let him believe, and whosoever wills, let him disbelieve." (Al-Kahf 18:29)

One of the Companions, Jabir ibn `Abdullah, narrated that the Prophet (PBBUH) went out to Al-Hudaibiyah with fourteen hundred followers. Only two years later, when he (PBBUH) set out to liberate Makkah, he (PBBUH) had ten thousand followers with him. This again proves that Islam spread peacefully, through the power of its message and gentle persuasion, not by the sword.

- b. Muslims no longer had to fear attacks from the Quraysh. This allowed them to shift the bulk of their attention to other hostile adversaries, such as the Jews of Khaybar and surrounding, adverse Arab tribes who plotted against them.
- c. The signing of Al-Hudaibiyah Treaty instilled awe in the polytheists and hypocrites living in Madinah. Many of them became increasingly convinced of the eventual supremacy of Islam. The concluded treaty also prompted contiguous Bedouin tribes to revise their previous attitudes and extend an apology to the Prophet (PBBUH) for not accompanying him on his pilgrimage journey, to which he had invited them. This successfully resulted in them entering into a ten-year truce agreement.
- d. Many of the Quraysh's noblemen and dignitaries began to reconsider

their old positions and embrace Islam, such as Khalid ibn Al-Walid and `Amr ibn Al-`As. Moreover, over the course of the negotiations, certain *Mushrikin* chieftains became attracted to the cause of Islam, such as Al-Hulais ibn `Alqamah.

- e. The terms of Al-Hudaibiyah Treaty made it easier for the Prophet (PBBUH) to concentrate his efforts on spreading Islam which, at this stage, took the form of sending envoys to the kings and rulers of Persia, Rome, and Egypt to help propagate Islam outside the Arabian Peninsula.

4. The treaty stipulated that anyone who fled from the Quraysh to join the Prophet (PBBUH) in Madinah, without the permission of their guardian, must be returned to the Quraysh; but the same was not binding on the Quraysh. They were not required to extradite any of the Prophet's (PBBUH) followers who deserted Islam for idolatry and returned to Makkah. Although this article of the treaty seemed very unfair to the Muslims and was the aspect that was most opposed by them, the Prophet (PBBUH) saw it differently. He (PBBUH) explained that only those who apostatized from the Islamic faith would escape to the Quraysh. In that case, they would be worthless companions to the Muslims: **“Whoever goes away from us to them (meaning both disbelieves and leaves Islam), may Allah keep him away.”** On the other hand, regarding the Makkans who became Muslims, but were prevented from joining their Muslim fellows in Madinah by the controlling authorities of the Quraysh tribe, the Prophet (PBBUH) assured that: **“Whoever comes to join us from them (and is sent back), Allah will grant him a way out.”**

The Prophet's anticipation was verified by the upcoming events much more rapidly than his Companions ever thought.

The Escape of Abu Basir

A few days after the Prophet's (PBBUH) return to Madinah, Abu Basir, a Muslim convert from the Quraysh, came to him for asylum. He had been imprisoned and tortured in Makkah for his Islamic faith. The Quraysh sent out

two men to demand his extradition in accordance with the provisions of Al-Hudaibiyah Treaty, which obviously applied to him.

The two Qurayshi men made their demand to the Prophet (PBBUH), who, in honor of his agreement with the Quraysh, handed over Abu Basir to them, after saying to him, **“O Abu Basir, we have given these people (the Quraysh) what you have known (i.e., a reconciliation treaty), and it is not right in our religion to betray (a treaty). Indeed, Allah will grant you, and the oppressed ones who are with you, relief and a way out (of your hardship), so go back to your people.”**

Abu Basir departed with the two men sent by the Quraysh to take him back to Makkah. When they stopped for rest and food at Dhul-Hulaifah, Abu Basir used trickery with one of them to seize his sword, drew it out of its sheath, and struck him dead with it. Seeing what happened to his comrade, the other man fled back to the Prophet (PBBUH) in Madinah to inform him of the incident. telling him, “Your companion has killed my companion.”

Abu Basir himself soon arrived, girded with the sword, and explained, “O Prophet of Allah, Allah has made you fulfill your obligation; you returned me to them, then Allah rescued me from them.” However, the Prophet (PBBUH) decided to hand him over to the Quraysh once again. When Abu Basir realized that he would be handed back, he ran away from Madinah to the sea coast area of Saif Al-Bahr, on the road which the Quraysh took to Al-Sham.

Without entering Makkah, he stationed himself in this strategic position on the return path of the Qurayshi caravans coming from Al-Sham.

As the story of Abu Basir spread among the oppressed and confined Muslims in Makkah, they began to escape and gather around him. Nearly seventy such persecuted men, among them Abu Jandal who was sent back on the day of Al-Hudaibiyah Treaty, joined Abu Basir at Saif Al-Bahr until they formed a strong group. They immediately embarked upon a plan to hurt the Quraysh’s interests by cutting off their trade route. Whenever they heard about a caravan of the

Quraysh heading towards Al-Sham, they intercepted it, killed its men, and took its goods.

The Quraysh Relinquishes the Hardest Provision of Al-Hudaibiyah Treaty

Only then did the Quraysh realize the intensity of the besetting danger they had incurred upon themselves through their injustice and despotic authority. They saw how these persecuted men without a homeland were now a thorn in their side and would continue to be a fundamental threat to their trade and economy. Consequently, they swallowed their pride and sent a request to the Prophet (PBBUH), in the name of their kinship, to abandon the provision of handing over to them Muslim fugitives from Makkah. Furthermore, they requested that he (PBBUH) take in runaway Muslims and grant them asylum in Madinah, in order to keep their trade route open and safe.

The Prophet (PBBUH) did as they requested. He (PBBUH) sent for the body of men assembled under the leadership of Abu Basir and granted them shelter in Madinah, along with anyone else who embraced Islam and wanted to safely join him.

This way, faster than anticipated, the unjust treaty condition was annulled and the Prophet's (PBBUH) statement became fulfilled: **“Indeed, Allah will grant you, and the oppressed ones who are with you, relief and a way out.”**

The Prophet (PBBUH) Refuses to Send Back Emigrating Muslim Women

The Prophet (PBBUH) dealt differently with the situation of female emigrants who embraced Islam and escaped from the Quraysh to Madinah. The case that triggered the issue was the first female refugee, Umm Kulthum. After Al-Hudaibiyah Treaty, Umm Kulthum, the daughter of `Uqbah ibn Abu Mu`ait, escaped and sought asylum with the Prophet (PBBUH). Her two brothers, `Umarah and Al-Walid ibn `Uqbah, went out after her and demanded her return

under the terms of the treaty. Other women did as Umm Kulthum had done and fled as emigrants to the Prophet (PBBUH), and their male relatives also came after them to ask for their extradition back to Makkah.

However, the Prophet (PBBUH) deliberated on the matter, judging that this treaty provision did not apply to women but was particular to men who fled the Quraysh (because the wording of the treaty exclusively used male pronouns). Moreover, the Prophet (PBBUH) deemed it mandatory that, no matter what, a woman asking for refuge and protection must be granted her request. Women should not be turned down, since they were not as physically strong as men and could be easily coerced or overpowered. Also, as part of her new identity as a Muslim, she must not remain married to her disbelieving husband; if her husband clung to disbelief in Allah's Oneness, their marriage under Islam became dissolved, and she must be separated from him.

On this issue, Allah (Exalted be He) revealed His Saying:

“O you who believe! When the believing women come to you as emigrants (refugees), examine (and test) them. Allah is most knowing as to their faith. Then, if you know them to be believers, do not send them back to the disbelievers; they are not lawful (wives) for them, nor are they lawful (husbands) for them. But give the disbelievers what they have spent (as *Mahr*: mandatory gift to a bride from her groom). And there will be no sin on you if you marry them when you have given them their due *Mahr*. And hold not to marriage bonds with disbelieving women, but ask for what you have spent (as *Mahr*) and let them ask for what they have spent. That is Allah's judgement; He judges between you. And Allah is Knowing and Wise.” (Al-Mumtahanah 60:10)

With the revelation of the previous Qur'anic injunction against sending back emigrating Muslim women, the Quraysh became certain that the Muslims would never violate it. Let alone the fact that now their position had grown more powerful than at the time they concluded Al-Hudaibiyah Treaty with them. Taking all this into consideration, the Quraysh saw it as unwise to claim that by

refusing to hand over emigrating Muslim women, the Prophet (PBBUH) was breaching the treaty and declaring war.

So, they tried to put an evasive interpretation upon the treaty provision that could serve the helpful purpose of saving their reputation and preserving their rapidly diminishing dignity. They said that the word “whoever” in the clause stating that “whoever comes to you from us, without his guardian’s permission, you must send him back to us,” referred alone to men, not women.

A Messenger of Mercy for All Humankind

At the end of the 6th year of Hijrah, and by virtue of the relative peace achieved by Al-Hudaibiyah Treaty, the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) began to set his sights on another aim and hope: proclaiming the universality of his message. He (PBBUH) began turning his attention towards spreading Islam beyond the Arabian Peninsula by inviting the kings and emperors of the surrounding empires to the true religion that Allah gave humankind.

When the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) decided to go forth with this task, he came out to his Companions one day, after the peace treaty of Al-Hudaibiyah, and said, **“O people, Allah has sent me as a mercy to all the people (of the earth), therefore, do not oppose me as the disciples of `Isa (Jesus PBBUH), son of Maryam (Mary), opposed him.”** The Companions asked, “How did the disciples oppose him, O Messenger of Allah?” He (PBBUH) replied, **“He called them to (a task like) that which I have called you. Those who were sent to nearby places (i.e., on a near mission) were pleased and accepted it; but those who were sent to distant places (i.e., on a far mission) were displeased and reluctant to go.”** The Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) then explained to them his plan to send envoys with letters calling non-Muslim kings and rulers to Islam.

The Qur’an refers to the special universality of the Prophet’s (PBBUH) mission in Allah’s Saying: “And We (Allah) have not sent you (O Muhammad) except as a giver of glad tidings and a warner to all humankind, but most of the people know not.” (Saba’ 34:28) This signifies that Islam is not restricted to the

Arabs alone, but is a universal message addressed to the human race as a whole. The Prophet's (PBBUH) teachings must be transmitted, and his message is for all people across the world.

Thus, consistent with the principle of spreading Islam among humankind, the Prophet (PBBUH) informed his Companions of his decision to communicate the message of Islam to Heraclius (Caesar), the Emperor of the Byzantine Empire; Kisra (Khosrow or Chosroes), the Emperor of the Persian Empire; the Negus, the King of Abyssinia; Al-Muqawqis, the King of Egypt, and other neighboring kings and rulers.

The Prophet's (PBBUH) Letters to the Kings and Rulers of Foreign Lands

When the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) wanted to address official letters to the kings and rulers beyond Arabia, he (PBBUH) was told that they would not read his letters unless they were stamped with a seal that was recognized as coming from him. So, under the advice of his Companions acquainted with the norms and customs observed in foreign lands, a special silver seal was made for him, in which were engraved the words: **“Muhammad, the Messenger of Allah.”** The three words were engraved on three lines, with ‘Muhammad’ on one line, ‘the Messenger’ on a second line, and ‘Allah’ on a third line, such that it was read from bottom to top, with Allah’s Name on top.

Thus, as was the custom in those days, all the Prophet's (PBBUH) letters were stamped with the words: “Muhammad, the Messenger of Allah.”

The Prophet's (PBBUH) Envoys, Bearing His Letters to the World's Kings

The Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) elected from among his Companions those who were fit and qualified for the task of acting as representatives of Islam in foreign lands; men who had the requisite personality traits (eloquence – good

manners – knowledge – patience – bravery – wisdom – gracious appearance) and necessary background and information of the empires to which they were sent.

The Prophet's (PBBUH) envoys who delivered his letters to the kings of the earth, calling them to Islam, were as follows:

Dihyah ibn Khalifah Al-Kalbi to Heraclius, the Emperor of the Byzantine Empire.

`Abdullah ibn Hudhafah Al-Sahmi to Chosroes, the King of Persia.

`Amr ibn Umayyah Ad-Damri to the Negus, the King of Abyssinia.

Hatib ibn Abu Balta`ah to Al-Muqawqis, the King of Egypt.

Al-Harith ibn `Umair to the Ruler of Busra.

Amr ibn Al-`As to the two Rulers of Oman, Jayfar and his brother `Abbad, the two sons of Al-Jalandi.

Also included were other rulers of small nations around the Arabian Peninsula and beyond.

The envoys started their journeys to various destinations across the earth at the same time, carrying the message of mercy contained in the letters of Messenger Muhammad (PBBUH). All the letters basically bore the same message, an example of which is the Prophet's (PBBUH) message to Heraclius (Caesar), which said: **In the Name of Allah, the Most Merciful, the Ever-Merciful. From Muhammad, the Slave of Allah and His Messenger, to Heraclius the Great of Byzantium. Peace be upon him who follows guidance.**

I am inviting you with the Call of Islam. Submit yourself (to Allah), you will be safe. Submit yourself (to Allah), Allah will give you your reward twice over. But if you turn away, upon you shall rest the sins of the Arisiyin (meaning all your subjects). "O people of the Scripture, come to a word that is just between us and you, that we worship none but Allah, and that we

associate no partners with Him, and that none of us shall take others as lords besides Allah. Then, if they turn away, say, ‘Bear witness that we are Muslims (i.e., we submit to Allah).’” (Al-`Imran 3:64)

Most noteworthy about the Prophet’s (PBBUH) letters was their lucid, meaningful, and to-the-point style that also rendered the proper respect to the addressees. They had almost the same content with small differences according to the addressees.

The emperors and rulers reacted in different ways to the Prophet’s (PBBUH) letters, as shall be shown later.

Khaybar

Reasons behind the Expedition

Through Al-Hudaibiyah Treaty, the Prophet (PBBUH) achieved security from the Quraysh and protected the entire southern flank of Madinah. As for its northern flank, it remained unprotected and vulnerable owing to the presence of the Jews of Khaybar in the vicinity.

The Khaybar Jewish community harbored a particularly strong enmity against the Prophet of Islam (PBBUH) and his followers. They became the focal point for Jews who emigrated or were exiled from Madinah. The chiefs among them were the ones who rallied the confederate forces and led the Battle of Al-Khandaq (Trench) against the Muslims. They incited the Jews of Banu Qurayzah to act treacherously and breach their treaty with Prophet Muhammad (PBBUH).

Khaybar, therefore, was a headquarters filled with intrigue and conspiracy and a major source of instigation to war and military provocation; that made it a priority on the Prophet's (PBBUH) strategic agenda.

When the Muslims returned after signing Al-Hudaibiyah Treaty, without having entered Makkah or circumambulating the Sacred House, and instead accepting a reconciliation agreement that contained some unfair terms, the Jews got the false impression that the Muslims had been compelled to accept the terms of the treaty due to their weakness. So, with that notion in mind, the Jews became set on taking revenge for themselves and their fellow exiled Jews: Banu Qaynuqa`, Banu Al-Nadir, and Banu Qurayzah.

They began devising plans and making preparations. They contacted the massive Najdi tribe of Ghatafan and sought their aid in waging war against the Muslims. In exchange, they promised them half the harvest of the city when they conquered the Muslims.

Khaybar, located eighty miles north of Madinah, was a large city, rich in plantations and studded with fortresses. Together, these fortresses formed a defensive system – they were arranged in groups and protected each other. The fortress city of Khaybar was the last stronghold of the Jews in the Arabian Peninsula and contained a large portion of the Jews who were expelled from Madinah because of their treacherous acts and betrayals.

Marching Out to Khaybar

The Prophet (PBBUH) was clearly aware of the imminent threat coming to the Muslims from the north. In order not to be surprised by a sudden attack, he (PBBUH) ordered the Muslims to set out to Khaybar two months after he came back from signing Al-Hudaibiyah Treaty. On this expedition, the Prophet (PBBUH) only allowed the participation of those who had accompanied him to Al-Hudaibiyah and taken the pledge of Al-Ridwan.

The hypocrites who had stayed behind and not taken part in Al-Hudaibiyah came to the Prophet (PBBUH) prior to the expedition, keen to receive a share of any booty. They demonstrated their willingness to go out with him on this expedition, and he (PBBUH) replied to them, **“Do not come out with me unless you desire to strive. But if you are out for booty, then do not come.”** Thus, a force of fourteen hundred Companions, who had all taken the Pledge of Al-Ridwan under the tree, set out to Khaybar with the Prophet (PBBUH).

On the Way to Khaybar

The Prophet (PBBUH) set out with his army on Muharram, two months after the signing of Al-Hudaibiyah Treaty. He (PBBUH) had his wife Umm Salamah in his company. They headed to Khaybar by following the path of `Isr Mount, then Al-Sahba' (a spot near Khaybar), and then stopped at a valley called Al-Raji', which lay between the dwelling places of Ghatafan and Khaybar. The Prophet (PBBUH) dismounted and encamped with his army at that spot, to stand as an obstacle between the two allies and obstruct any reinforcements from Ghatafan reaching the Jews of Khaybar.

The people of Ghatafan gathered together upon hearing of the arrival of the Muslims at Al-Raji` valley, and rushed to Khaybar to support their allies, the Jews, against them. However, after crossing some distance, they suspected they heard sounds and commotion coming from the rear. Thinking their families and properties had come under attack, they swiftly returned homeward, leaving the way clear between the Prophet (PBBUH) and Khaybar.

The Muslim army continued their march to Khaybar and followed a route leading into it from the north, which would cut the Jews off from their escape route through Al-Sham.

Fear Strikes the Jews

The Muslim army reached Khaybar after three days of traveling, during which time the inhabitants of the city remained totally oblivious to the advancing troops until it was too late. They were standing right in front of their fortresses.

The Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) reached Khaybar at night. It was not his habit to attack an enemy's territory at night, so he waited for the morning. The following morning, the gates of the fortresses opened and the workers of Khaybar came out with their spades and baskets. When they saw him with the army lined up, ready to meet them, they said, "It is Muhammad, by Allah! Muhammad and his army."

On hearing this, the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) declared, "***Allahu Akbar!***¹ **Khaybar is destroyed! When we descend into the courtyard (of the enemy), evil will be the morning for those who had been warned.**" (And heeded not; this phrase is quoted from the Noble Qur'an 37:177).

Although the Jews were well equipped and well fortified inside their fortresses, they were afraid. Numerically, they were the stronger; they had ten

¹ Literally means 'Allah is Greater;' it is an unfinished phrase serving as a reminder of Allah's Sovereignty; that no matter what you can possibly think of or might be busy with, Allah is far vaster, grander, loftier, mightier, and more important.

thousand men, fully armed and supplied, facing a Muslim force of only fourteen hundred men.

The Jews had already been forewarned of the march of the Muslim army to Khaybar by their ally in Madinah, `Abdullah ibn Ubai ibn Salul. He sent word informing them about the imminent military expedition against them, led by the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH). And to bolster their confidence, he belittled the capabilities of the Muslim army and encouraged them to resist them by assuring that they were no challenge to them, just a small, poorly equipped force.

Yet, despite the emboldening factors at play in their favor, the Jews were extremely troubled at the prospect of the approaching attack, to the point of shivering with fear. Almighty Allah cast such fear into their hearts.

The Muslim army now stood at the fortified town of Khaybar, and the fortresses of the Jews would start to fall under siege.

The Main Fortresses of Khaybar

Khaybar was divided into three fortified regions, each of which consisted of several fortresses:

- a. The fortification region of Al-Natat district was composed of four fortresses:
 1. The fortress of Al-Natat.
 2. The fortress of Al-Na`im.
 3. The fortress of Al-Sa`b bin Mu`adh.
 4. The fortress of Al-Zubair Castle.

- b. The fortification region of Al-Shaq district was composed of two fortresses:
 1. The fortress of Ibn Abu Al-Huqayq.
 2. The fortress of Al-Nazar.

- c. The fortification region of Al-Katibah district was composed of three fortresses:
1. The fortress of Al-Qamus.
 2. The fortress of Al-Watih.
 3. The fortress of Al-Sulalim.

This was in addition to other smaller fortresses that were not as impregnable and strongly built as the three major ones.

Camp Location of the Muslim Army

The Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) camped with his troops close to the fortress of Al-Natat. Yet, a veteran among his Companions, named Al-Hubab ibn Al-Mundhir, considered it to be a tactically vulnerable position, so he approached the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) and said, “O Messenger of Allah, is this a place which Allah has ordered you to occupy, or is it a matter open to military opinion (i.e., tactics and stratagem)?”

He (PBBUH) replied, **“It is a matter open to opinion (i.e., open to consultation).”**

On hearing this, Al-Hubab said, “O Messenger of Allah, this place is very close to the fortress of Al-Natat, and all the fighters of Khaybar are garrisoned in it. They will know our situation (due to being situated high above us), whereas we cannot know their situation. (And since they are shooting down at us) their arrows can reach us, whereas our arrows cannot reach them. Would you consider giving orders to shift to another place for encampment?”

The Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) approved of the counsel of Al-Hubab and accordingly removed his troops from proximity to this stronghold and stationed them around the fortress of Al-Na`im.

Beginning of Fighting and the First Signs of Victory

The strategy of the Muslims was to conquer one fortress at a time. The strategy of the Jews was to rely on the individual strength of each of their fortresses.

Fighting began with an attack on the fortress of Al-Na`im. It formed the first defense line of the Jews due to its strategic position. A lengthy and serious confrontation broke out there. For several days, the Muslims launched a barrage of arrows to counter the defending Jews who were desperately resisting the Muslim fighters closing in on the fortress. Whenever the attack on them became fierce and the danger mounted, the Jews retreated to their fortress and shut themselves in.

The first attempt to conquer the fortress of Al-Na`im was made under the leadership of Abu Bakr Al-Siddiq. The Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) gave him the banner and he fought vigorously, but returned without achieving victory. On the following day, the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) sent `Umar ibn Al-Khattab who, like Abu Bakr, returned with the same results.

Exhaustion then overtook everyone in the army, and so the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) reanimated their hopes for victory by announcing that night, **“Tomorrow, I shall give the banner to a man who loves Allah and His Messenger and who is loved by Allah and His Messenger, and Allah shall grant us victory through him.”**

The Prophet’s (PBBUH) statement left everyone wondering who would be handed the banner, and deeply aspiring for this mission. As soon as morning broke, they hastened to the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH), each hoping that he would be the one to receive the banner. Then the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) asked them, **“Where is `Ali ibn Abu Talib?”** He (PBBUH) was told that `Ali was suffering from an ailment in his eyes. He (PBBUH) said, **“Send for him,”** When `Ali came, the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) spat in his eyes and supplicated Allah for him. Instantly, his eyes were cured, and `Ali felt as if he had never had

any eye trouble. The Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) then gave him the banner and said to him, **“Proceed without hurry until you enter their territory. Then, invite them to embrace Islam and inform them of what Allah has enjoined upon them in it (i.e., Islam). For by Allah, even if a single man is led on the right path (of Islam) by Allah through you, that will be better for you than to have red camels (i.e., the most valuable of all property to the Arabs at the time).”**

‘Ali ibn Abu Talib took the banner and set off on his mission. Once he approached the fortress, its inhabitants came out against him. While fighting them valiantly, one of the Jews hit him and knocked his shield out of his hand. ‘Ali picked up a door that was near the fortress and shielded himself with it. He continued to fight, using that door as a shield, until the fortress was conquered. Then he laid it across the ground it as a bridge for the passage of his troops into the buildings of the fortress of Al-Na`im.

Conquest of One Fortress after Another

Next came the conquest of the fortress of Al-Natat. Having seized the fortress of Al-Na`im, the Muslims then took over the stronghold of Al-Natat, which was extremely difficult and formidable. The Muslims proceeded to lay siege to one fortress after another. Each fortress was overcome one by one. When each of them came under attack, its occupants retreated to another stronghold.

The Fortress of Al-Sa`b ibn Mu`adh

The Muslims captured this fortress after three days of siege, under the leadership of Al-Habab ibn Al-Mundhir. The Muslim army had become short on food supplies. With the fall of this stronghold, their dwindling provisions were replenished through the abundant food stores they found inside, which enabled them to continue fighting and besieging the rest of the Jewish strongholds.

The Fortress of Al-Zubair Castle

After the downfall of the fortresses of Al-Na`im and Al-Sa`b ibn Mu`adh, the Jews withdrew from all the fortresses of Al-Natat region to Al-Zubair Castle, which was an impregnable fortress situated on a highland inaccessible to both cavalry and infantry.

The Prophet (PBBUH) led the siege of Al-Zubair Castle. It lasted for three days and ended with conquest when they cut off the subterranean water supply that the castle relied on. This forced the Jews to come out and engage in a strong battle, during which some Muslims were killed and ten Jews were injured.

The Fortress of Ibn Abu Al-Huqayq

Forced to retreat from Al-Zubair Castle, the Jews fortified themselves in the fortress of Ibn Abu Al-Huqayq. The Muslims besieged them there. Then Abu Dujanah Simak, the great Muslim hero who distinguished himself in battles by wearing a red headband, led the Muslim army and broke into the fortress. After some serious fighting inside, the Jews escaped to another fortress called Al-Nazar.

The Fortress of Al-Nazar

This fortress was one of the most impregnable and secure in Khaybar. The Jews considered it the safest place for their women and children, and had almost complete certainty that such a highly situated, defensible fortress could never be captured by the Muslims. At first, Al-Nazar stood invincible. The Muslims laid tight siege to it without being able to penetrate it. Then the Prophet (PBBUH) ordered that a mangonel be set up, and it was used to make a breach in the walls of Al-Nazar fortress, allowing the Muslim men to rush into it and engage in a fierce battle with the Jewish fighters inside.

As a result, a decisive defeat was inflicted on the Jews. But this defeat was the most overwhelming and confusing. They could not, as in the previous rounds, sneak out of the fortress and make their way to another fortress. They just abandoned the fortress and fled, leaving behind all their women and children.

Eventually, all the fortresses in the Al-Natat and Al-Shaq districts were conquered and withdrawn from the power of the Jews.

The Fortresses of Al-Katibah District

The Prophet (PBBUH) moved with his army to the last fortified region of Khaybar, which was Al-Katibah district. There, they contained the fortresses of Al-Qamus, Al-Watih, and Al-Sulalim. He (PBBUH) laid a heavy siege to it for fourteen days, and throughout this period the Jews kept themselves barricaded inside them and did not venture out to face open battle. Only when they saw the mangonel being prepared for action did they realize that if vanquished, they would be destroyed. Finally, they came down out of their fortresses and asked to negotiate peace.

The Treaty of Khaybar

After capturing most of the strongholds of Khaybar, the Prophet (PBBUH) made peace with its Jewish inhabitants on the following terms: their lives would be spared, but they must relinquish the ownership of their land, property, and cattle to the Muslim community. Accordingly, all remaining fortresses in the city were surrendered to the Muslims, and the Conquest of Khaybar was complete.

In comparison to the Jews of Banu Qaynuqa` and Banu Al-Nadir, who were forced to entirely evacuate their territory, the Prophet (PBBUH) treated the Jews of Khaybar differently. Apparently one reason for this was that, with the downfall of Khaybar, Jewish power was no longer a threat. Based on the new situation in the region, it became impossible for them to ever rise again to the heights of power they had once occupied.

Clearly, the large areas of fields and orchards in Khaybar needed experienced workers, and so the Prophet (PBBUH) allowed the Jews to continue to live in Khaybar and work the land in return for one-half of the harvest for their services. Also, through this arrangement, Muslims were freed up for the more important task of striving for Islam.

Thus, the Prophet (PBBUH) turned Khaybar over to its laboring inhabitants for one-half of the produce. Every year, at harvest time, he (PBBUH) would send `Abdullah ibn Rawahah to them to estimate and divide the yearly crops of Khaybar into two equal parts and grant them their one-half share.

The Prophet (PBBUH) Shows Magnanimity Towards the Jews in Strong Contrast with the Attitudes of Past Conquerors

When the Romans conquered Jerusalem, they burned to ashes all the sacred writings they found in the temple, trampled them under foot, and left them all desecrated and destroyed. The Christians were no better; they perpetrated the same acts of sacrilege on the Torah books during their crusades against the Jewish people in Al-Andalus (Muslim Spain).

In strong contrast to them was the conduct which the Prophet (PBBUH) enjoined his followers to observe towards the sacred writings of the Jews (despite the distortions and interpolations they were subject to). In the course of the siege and capture of the fortresses of Khaybar, the Muslims seized among the booty some copies of the Torah, which the Prophet (PBBUH) commanded his Companions to give back – intact – to their owners, the Jews, after victory was achieved.

Restoration of these Torah copies, especially at a time when Jewish military power was on the decline, demonstrated tolerance as a central tenet of Islam and its understanding and recognition of the religious rights of others.

The Booty Won in the Battle of Khaybar

Of all the Prophet's (PBBUH) battles, the Battle of Khaybar ranked among the largest in terms of how much war booty the Muslims won, which consisted of land, date-palm trees, clothing, and food. The Prophet (PBBUH) distributed it all after setting aside the one-fifth share.

Included among the booty were the female captives of the defeated party. Among them was Lady Safiyyah, the daughter of Huyai ibn Akhtab, the chief of the Jewish tribe of Banu Al-Nadir. The Prophet (PBBUH) emancipated her and married her after she had embraced Islam.

In this battle, ninety-three Jews were killed, and sixteen to twenty Muslims were martyred.

Ja`far Returns from Abyssinia with the Emigrants

The Muslim emigrants to Abyssinia had been staying there for around fifteen years, during which time much had happened in Arabia. Great events and developments had taken place, which those Muslims keenly followed from their land of asylum.

News from Makkah reached them regarding how the Muslims were emigrating in successive waves from their homeland to Madinah, and how the Prophet (PBBUH) himself had finally joined them. They received with delight the news of the victory at the Battle of Badr, and several other events that occurred during their stay in Abyssinia up until the signing of Al-Hudaibiyah Treaty. This last event, in particular, gave the struggle of the Muslims against the Quraysh a competitive peer-to-peer nature.

Once circumstances had changed for the better, the Prophet (PBBUH) saw that the conditions that had created the need for the Muslims to seek asylum had ended. It was now time for the Muslims who had taken asylum in Abyssinia to return home. For this task, the Prophet (PBBUH) sent `Amr ibn Umayyah Al-Damari with a letter to the Negus, the King of Abyssinia, asking him to allow for their return. This letter was different to the one sent with `Amr ibn Umayyah inviting him and other kings and emperors of the earth to Islam.

In response, the Negus provided two ships for their sea journey back to Arabia. The Muslim emigrants sailed until they reached Yanbu`, the closest port

to Madinah. From there, they traveled the remaining distance to Madinah on foot.

While on the way to their new homeland, they heard of the Prophet's (PBBUH) expedition to Khaybar, and so the men among the returning emigrants of Abyssinia hurried to catch up with him (PBBUH).

The female emigrants arrived in Madinah. Among them was Ramlah (known by the nickname Umm Habibah), the daughter of Abu Sufyan. In contrast to her father, she was one of the first believers and fled oppression to Abyssinia with her husband. He died there, leaving her widowed with a child. In his second letter, the Prophet (PBBUH) requested that the Negus present her with a marriage proposal on his behalf. Umm Habibah accepted the marriage proposal, and their marriage ceremony was conducted in Abyssinia by the Negus. She came to Madinah bearing the title of "Mother of All Believers."

The arrival of the Companions who had emigrated to Abyssinia, with Ja`far ibn Abu Talib leading them, coincided with the day of the Conquest of Khaybar. Seeing them after so many years, especially Ja`far, made the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) joyous and very emotional. He (PBBUH) kissed Ja`far between his eyes and said, **"By Allah, I do not know with which I should be more pleased: the Conquest of Khaybar or the arrival of Ja`far?"**

Another Attempt Made on the Prophet's (PBBUH) Life

Now that the prospect of capital punishment with exile had receded, and peace prevailed after the Conquest of Khaybar, the Jews again resorted to the tactic of assassination.

The first assassination attempt took place in the Jewish district of Banu Al-Nadir. Their chiefs plotted to kill the Prophet (PBBUH) by dropping a stone on his head as he (PBBUH) sat talking with them, but Allah (Exalted be He) protected him from their evil scheming.

The second assassination attempt was committed by a Jewish woman named Zainab bint Al-Harith. She was the wife of Salam ibn Mishkam. After securing the victory of Khaybar and concluding peace with its inhabitants, this Jewish woman presented the Prophet (PBBUH) with a roasted sheep she had poisoned. In order to make her plot successful, she first took care to enquire which part of the sheep the Prophet (PBBUH) liked best. Having been told that it was the foreleg, she put a large amount of poison into it, and also poisoned the rest of the sheep. She then brought it and placed it before the Prophet (PBBUH). He (PBBUH) took the foreleg and chewed a morsel of it, but he (PBBUH) quickly spat it out without swallowing it, and said, **“This bone tells me that it is poisoned.”**

The Prophet (PBBUH) summoned the woman, confronted her, and she confessed. On asking her what had induced her to do such a thing, she replied, “It is not hidden from you what you have done to my people (the Jews). So, I said to myself, ‘If he is a king, I shall be rid of him; and if he is a prophet, he will be informed (of my deed).’” The Prophet (PBBUH) forgave her for what she did and did not punish her.

The Remaining Jews of the Arabian Peninsula Submit to Peace Agreements

Having set out for Khaybar, the Prophet (PBBUH) sent word inviting the Jews of Fadak to Islam. Fadak was a garden oasis about a two-day journey from Khaybar. The Jews of Fadak deferred giving an answer, waiting to see which way the battle would go.

When they heard news of the victory of Khaybar, fear struck them. They hastened to enter into peace negotiations with the Prophet (PBBUH). They asked to be treated on the same terms and conditions as the people of Khaybar (i.e., to remain as cultivators of their properties for a half share), and the Prophet (PBBUH) accepted. Since Fadak surrendered without fighting, it became his exclusive right.

The Jews of Al-Qura Valley

After the Battle of Khaybar and the Conquest of Fadak, the Prophet (PBBUH) proceeded to Al-Qura Valley, which was inhabited by a Jewish tribe along with a group of Arabs who had joined them. The Prophet (PBBUH) first invited them to Islam, but they neither accepted nor entered into a pact. Instead, they took the military option and met the Muslims with arrows.

Dueling then took place. The best fighters on both sides faced one another on the field until eleven Jews were killed. Each time one was killed, the Prophet (PBBUH) would repeat the call to Islam to the rest of them. For one or two days, the Jews resisted. Finally, they surrendered under the same peace conditions as the people of Khaybar. This resulted in a large booty for the Muslims.

The Jews of Tayma'

The Jews at the oasis of Tayma' had already been apprised of the defeats and surrenders sustained at Khaybar, Fadak, and, lastly, at Al-Qura Valley. They had no intention of resisting against the Muslims. On the contrary, they themselves took the initiative and offered to sign a reconciliation treaty. The Prophet (PBBUH) accepted, and they agreed to peace and payment of a *Jizyah* (poll tax required from non-Muslims living in an Islamic state). In return, their community continued to live safely and securely on their land.

Heading back to Madinah

In late Safar or early Rabi` Al-Awwal of the 7th year of Hijrah, the Prophet (PBBUH) began his journey back home to Madinah, victorious and grateful. He (PBBUH) had succeeded in subduing the power of the Jews across the entire Arabian Peninsula, bringing them under his authority.

The Return of the Ambassadors of Islam and the Different Replies That Foreign Kings Gave to the Invitation to Islam

Signing Al-Hudaibiyah Treaty set the stage for the expansion of Islam beyond the peninsula. The Prophet (PBBUH) sent ambassadors with letters to the kings and rulers of neighboring empires and states, which contained a clear, simple, attention-grabbing invitation to Islam. The envoys, commissioned by the Prophet (PBBUH), made their way to their assigned destinations across the region. Overall, their round-trip journeys took two months or more and spanned the period that encompassed the Battle of Khaybar and its aftermath.

With the return of the Prophet (PBBUH), the ambassadors who carried the message of Islam started returning to Madinah, each with a different reply to his invitation. The following were the most important replies given by the kings and rulers to the invitation of the Prophet (PBBUH):

1. Reply of Heraclius, the Emperor of the Byzantine Empire:

The delivery of the letter by Dihyah ibn Khalifah Al-Kalbi to Heraclius coincided with his victorious return from defeating the Persians. Heraclius became neither angry nor excited when the letter was read to him, but he showed interest.

Heraclius and His Conversation with Abu Sufyan

Heraclius was concerned about the contents of the letter. He wanted to acquaint himself with the character of the man who had sent him this message. So, he said to his court messenger, “Seek for me any one of his people (tribesmen of the Quraysh) who are present here to ask them about the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH).”

Coincidentally, at that time, Abu Sufyan bin Harb was in Al-Sham region with a group of merchants from the Quraysh on a commercial trip (during the truce period of Al-Hudaibiyah Treaty). Heraclius' messenger found Abu Sufyan and his comrades in some part of the Levant. He took them to Iliya (Jerusalem), where they were admitted into Heraclius' presence at the royal court.

Surrounded by his senior Byzantine dignitaries, Heraclius started asking them questions through his translator.

He first asked them, "Who among you is closest in kinship to this man who claims to be a prophet?"

Abu Sufyan replied, "I am."

On that trip, none of the clan of Banu 'Abd Manaf was in this trading caravan except Abu Sufyan.

Heraclius ordered Abu Sufyan to come closer. When he came closer, he ordered his comrades to be seated close behind him.

Heraclius said to his translator, "Tell his companions that I made this man (Abu Sufyan) stand in front of you to ask him about this person who claims to be a prophet, and I made you stand behind him so that you will not be ashamed to refute him, if he should tell a lie (while he is giving his testimony)."

The Byzantine emperor started questioning Abu Sufyan, and the following conversation took place between them:

Heraclius asked, "What is his lineage among you?"

Abu Sufyan replied, "He is of noble lineage among us."

Heraclius asked, "Prior to him, did anyone else among you make the claim he has made?"

Abu Sufyan replied, "No."

Heraclius asked, “Was he ever accused of lying before he claimed what he claimed?”

Abu Sufyan replied, “No.”

Heraclius asked, “Has he ever betrayed a covenant?”

Abu Sufyan replied, “No. We are in a time of truce with him, yet we do not know what he will do during it.” [This was the sole chance that Abu Sufyan could grab throughout their conversation to insert a statement against the Prophet (PBBUH) to impugn his character.]

Heraclius asked, “Were any of his ancestors a king?”

Abu Sufyan replied, “No.”

Heraclius asked, “Are his followers nobles or weak people (i.e., the lower or upper classes)?”

Abu Sufyan replied, “Weak people.”

Heraclius asked, “Are his followers increasing or decreasing?”

Abu Sufyan replied, “They are increasing.”

Heraclius asked, “Have any of them abandoned their religion (i.e., Islam) after embracing it, due to being displeased with it?”

Abu Sufyan replied, “No.”

Heraclius asked, “Did you fight wars against him?”

Abu Sufyan replied, “Yes.”

Heraclius asked, “What were the results of these wars?”

Abu Sufyan replied, “Alternating victory and defeat; sometimes he defeated us, and sometimes we defeated him.”

Heraclius asked, “What commandments does he give you?”

Abu Sufyan replied, “He tells us to worship Allah alone without ascribing divinity to anyone else. He forbids us to worship what our forefathers used to worship. He commands us to pray, to be truthful, to be chaste, to keep our promises, and to preserve and restore what is committed to our trust.”

Here the conversation ended, and the emperor said in conclusion, “Indeed, these are the qualities of a prophet. If what you have told me is true, he will soon occupy this place underneath my feet (i.e., his dominion will extend to the earth under my feet). I knew (from previous scriptures) that he (the Final Prophet) was about to appear, but I never thought that he would come from you (the Arabs). Had I been certain that I would be able to reach him, I would have undertaken difficulty (and risk) to meet him. And if I was with him, I would wash his feet.”

Immediately after Heraclius finished his speech and had read the letter, a great hue and cry arose from the Byzantine dignitaries surrounding him. When the noise became too loud, Abu Sufyan and his companions were ordered out of the royal court.

Once they had gone out and were alone, Abu Sufyan said to his companions, “The matter of Ibn Abi Kabsha¹ has grown so powerful that even the King of Banu Al-Asfar (the Byzantines, the Romans) is afraid of him.”

Heraclius sent Dihyah back with a gracious reply and gifts to the Prophet (PBBUH). Upon his return to Madinah, Dihyah reported what had happened to the Prophet (PBBUH).

2. Reply of Khosrow, the Emperor of the Persian Empire:

The Prophet’s (PBBUH) invitation letter to Islam, carried by `Abdullah ibn Hudhafah Al-Sahmi, reached Kisra (Khosrow or Chosroes), the Emperor of the Persian Empire, who was still feeling the bitterness of his defeat at the hands of

¹ A pejorative name given to Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) by the disbelievers.

the Byzantines. Upon hearing the letter read out to him, he became enraged and tore it to pieces, saying in disdain, “A wretched slave among my subjects dares write his name before mine!”

Upon being informed of his response, the Prophet (PBBUH) said, **“May Allah tear apart his kingdom.”** The Prophet’s (PBBUH) supplication against him was soon fulfilled, and the downfall of his empire followed only seven or eight years later.

Kisra tearing up the letter was not his sole reaction to the Prophet’s (PBBUH) message. He also wrote to Badhan, his viceroy in Yemen, ordering him to dispatch two strong men to Hijaz to bring him this man (meaning Muhammad PBBUH).

Without delay, Badhan sent two of his envoys to Madinah to accomplish the mission. When they stood in the presence of the Prophet (PBBUH), they addressed him, saying, “King of the Kings, Kisra, has written to King Badhan, commanding him to send someone to you in order to bring you to him (at his royal court). If you refuse, you know who he is! He will destroy you, destroy your people, and destroy your land.” To this, the Prophet (PBBUH) replied, **“Go away, and come to me tomorrow.”**

On that same night, the Prophet (PBBUH) was divinely informed that Shirawayh, the son of Kisra, had risen in revolt against his father. He then killed him and usurped his throne. The following day when the two envoys came to him, the Prophet (PBBUH) said to them, **“Tell your companion,”** in reference to Badhan, **“that my Lord has killed his lord (meaning Kisra) this night. Allah empowered his son Shirawayh against him, and he killed him.”**

The two men departed Madinah with the news. When they came to Badhan and told him what the Prophet (PBBUH) said had happened, he decided to wait to see how events would unfold. He told them, “If he is a prophet, what he has said will be true.”

A few days later, Badhan received a letter from Shirawayh in which he confirmed his assassination of Kisra, saying, "I have killed Kisra. I killed him only out of rage for Persia." Badhan read along until he came to the part of the letter that said, "See to the man about whom Kisra wrote to you (to arrest him). Do not provoke him until you receive further orders from me concerning him."

Badhan realized for certain that he was a prophet sent by Allah. He became Muslim, and all the Persians living in Yemen became Muslim with him.

3. Reply of the Negus, the King of Abyssinia:

With great honor, the Negus received the Prophet's (PBBUH) letter sent through `Amr ibn Umayyah Ad-Damri. He placed it over his eyes, came down from his throne, and sat modestly on the ground. He declared his faith in Islam, to which he had already been introduced, and wrote back a message to the Prophet (PBBUH) stating this. He then ordered that the Prophet's (PBBUH) letter be preserved in an ivory casket.

When the Negus died, the Prophet (PBBUH) offered a congregational Funeral Prayer in absentia for him in Madinah.

4. Reply of Al-Muqawqis, the King of Egypt:

Another of the Prophet's (PBBUH) envoys, Hatib ibn Abu Balta`ah, delivered a letter of invitation to Al-Muqawqis, the ruler of Egypt, under the authority of the Byzantine Emperor, Heraclius.

Al-Muqawqis reacted differently than Kisra to the letter and was more gracious in his response than Heraclius; but still, his response was measured.

His first reaction and statement after reading the Prophet's (PBBUH) letter was, "What prevented him, if he was truly a prophet, from supplicating against those who opposed him and drove him out of his land?"

Hatib replied, “Do you not testify that `Isa ibn Maryam (Jesus, son of Mary PBBUH) was a Messenger of Allah? If so, when his people took him to kill him, why did he not invoke that Allah might destroy them, until Allah raised him to Him?”

Al-Muqawqis said, “You have spoken well. You are a wise man who has come from a wise man.”

He then continued, “I have inquired into the matter of this Prophet. I have found that he enjoins nothing that is detestable, and he forbids nothing that is good. He is neither a straying magician nor a lying soothsayer. And he bears the sign of prophethood: revealing hidden and secret things. I will consider the matter deeply.”

Al-Muqawqis then placed the Prophet’s (PBBUH) letter in an ivory box and sealed it. He extended honorable treatment to the Prophet’s (PBBUH) envoy, Hatib ibn Abu Balta`ah, and entrusted him with several gifts to present to the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH). He then summoned a scribe who could write Arabic, and dictated this letter as a reply to the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH):

In the name of Allah, the Most Merciful, the Beneficent. To Muhammad ibn Abdullah from Al-Muqawqis, the Great Ruler of the Copts. Peace be upon you. I have read your letter and understood what you said in it, and the religion to which you call (people). I know that there is a prophet still to come, but I thought that he would appear in Al-Sham. I have honored your envoy and I am sending to you two maids who are of high status among the Copts, and (I am presenting you with) some clothes, and a mule for you to ride. Peace be upon you.”

The two maid slaves whom Al-Muqawqis sent to the Prophet (PBBUH) as a present were two Coptic sisters, Mariyah and Sirin. The Prophet (PBBUH) kindly settled Mariyah (often referred to as Mary the Coptic) as his wife in a house of her own. She became the mother of his son Ibrahim¹, who died in infancy. As for

¹ In Islam, such a captive woman or bondswoman was called *Umm Walad*, meaning the Mother of a Child, by which she automatically took on the status of a wedded wife and became a free woman.

her sister Sirin, the Prophet (PBBUH) granted her as a wife to his poet Companion Hassan ibn Thabit, and she bore him his son Abdul-Rahman.

5. Reply of the Ruler of Busra:

Of all the replies to the letters addressed by the Prophet (PBBUH) to the different kings, that given by the ruler of Busra in Syria was the harshest.

Al-Harith ibn Umair Al-Azdi, the one entrusted with the letter, had just reached Mu'tah, a village of Al-Balqa' on the way to Busra, when he was intercepted by Shurahbil ibn Amr Al-Ghassani, the governor of Al-Balqa under the Byzantine Emperor.

He asked him, "Where are you going?" to which Al-Harith replied, "Syria."

He said, "Perhaps you are one of the envoys of Muhammad?"

Al-Harith replied, "Yes." Shurahbil then ordered his death, and his head was struck off.

According to the practiced norms of the time, killing envoys was a great taboo, universally construed as an act of declaring war. None of the other envoys sent by the Prophet (PBBUH) met the same fate as Al-Harith. When the news of his killing was brought to the Prophet (PBBUH), he felt deeply grieved. As events would later show, this incident was a primary cause of the Battle of Mu'tah.

Through these letters and the replies that the various envoys brought back, the Prophet (PBBUH) communicated his message to most of the kings and rulers of the world at that time. Some believed, while others rejected his message and persisted in their disbelief. But regardless of their reaction, the long-term impact was more important. The appearance of the new prophet occupied the minds of these kings. They were made aware who the Prophet (PBBUH) was, as well as his mission and religion, from his own mouth and not from someone else.

Compensatory `Umrah

A full year had passed since the agreement of Al-Hudaibiyah was made in the month of Dhul-Qa`dah towards the end of the 7th year of Hijrah. Accordingly, the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) and his Companions were free to enter Makkah and perform compensatory `Umrah to make up for the one from which they had been barred the previous year, as had been agreed in their treaty with the Quraysh.

Coming to Makkah this year was thus a settled and expected matter. The Prophet (PBBUH) gave orders for preparations to be made to set out for `Umrah. He (PBBUH) permitted no one to stay behind, particularly the men who had witnessed Al-Hudaibiyah Treaty.

So, with the exception of those who were martyred at Khaybar, everyone who had witnessed Al-Hudaibiyah Treaty, as well as many others who had not, came out to join the compensatory `Umrah with the Prophet (PBBUH). In the year of Al-Hudaibiyah, fourteen hundred men had accompanied the Prophet (PBBUH), but this time their number was two thousand men, as well as the women and children.

As stipulated by the treaty, the Muslims carried no weaponry with them, except sheathed swords that travelers normally carried on journeys. Obviously, it was necessary to take some strong precautions against treachery; the Quraysh might incite their ally tribes to attack the Muslims before they streamed into the sanctuary region. Without backup defense, they would be an easy target and easily destroyed. Therefore, the Prophet (PBBUH) prepared two hundred horsemen, along with the requisite equipment of swords, shields, and arrows, to travel ahead of the group of pilgrims, and he (PBBUH) appointed Muhammad ibn Maslamah as their commander.

Muslims Reunite with Their Birthland After a Long Separation

With the Prophet (PBBUH) in the lead on his she-camel Al-Qaswa, the procession of Muslim pilgrims advanced. They were an awe-inspiring sight: hundreds of people attired in the same clothing, driving sixty sacrificial camels along with them, and all of them reciting *Talbiyah*¹ out loud with the Prophet (PBBUH).

Near Marr Al-Zahran area, where the Muslims made camp and were close enough to see the idols erected all around the sanctuary, the Prophet (PBBUH) ordered that all weapons be left guarded by the party of two hundred horsemen at Ya'jaj Valley, which was situated only eighteen kilometers outside Makkah. He (PBBUH) then proceeded towards Makkah, with all swords resting in their sheaths just as he had agreed with the Quraysh in the peace treaty.

And now, finally, after long years of separation, the Prophet (PBBUH), surrounded by the Muslims, entered Makkah. They were all reciting *Talbiyah* (Here I am at Your Service, O Allah, here I am...) and *Takbir* (Glorified be Allah). At the sight of the Sacred House, their tears and emotion smothered any words. They felt so thankful to return to Makkah, the beloved land of their birth and youth, after longing for so many years to return to it – even if just for a short time. For each of them, the experience rekindled memories of days gone by.

The Quraysh Evacuate the City

The *Mushrikin* and idolatrous inhabitants of Makkah withdrew to Abu Qubais Mount, and other mountains and hills overlooking Makkah, to evacuate the city for the Muslims and allow them to perform pilgrimage without any chance of conflict, as Al-Hudaibiyah Treaty stipulated.

While looking down upon the Muslims and observing them making their way to the Ka`bah and performing their rituals, the Makkans felt reluctant admiration. Some of them even circulated the following rumor about them: “A

¹ Devotional expressions chanted during Hajj and `Umrah.

group of people are coming to you, who have been weakened by the fever of Yathrib (the old name of Madinah).” Almighty Allah revealed what they had said to His Prophet (PBBUH).

Muslims Circumambulate the Ka`bah

The Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) and the Muslims started to circumambulate the Ka`bah, forming an imposing white-clothed multitude, their voice all saying, “*Here I am O Allah (in response to Your call), here I am! Here I am, You have no partner, here I am. Indeed, all praise, grace, and sovereignty belong to You...*”

The whole place shook and vibrated to the rhythm of their supplication. It rang in the ears and hearts of the Makkans, who stood and watched them from the top of the hills, and felt totally absorbed in the grand spectacle before them.

To confute the rumor that the Muslims had grown feeble with fever, which at the time they arrived was epidemic in Yathrib, the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) said to his Companions, “**May Allah have mercy on the one who shows them his strength today.**”

The Prophet (PBBUH) then jogged around the Ka`bah for the first three of the seven prescribed circuits. The Muslims, all two thousand of them, followed him in every move, jogging when he (PBBUH) jogged, walking when he (PBBUH) walked, and stopping when he (PBBUH) stopped, while the Quraysh watched them from the top of the nearby hills and mountains. Everything they saw showed the Muslims to be much stronger and much better than they had ever been.

After finishing the seven-round *Tawaf* (circumambulation of the Ka`bah), the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) performed a seven-round *Sa`y* (running between Al-Safa and Al-Marwah hills). He (PBBUH) then slaughtered his sacrificial animal at Al-Marwah hill and shaved his head. All his Companions were following him and doing the same as he did.

With the final rituals completed, the Prophet (PBBUH) ordered two hundred of his Companions to go and replace the unit of horsemen standing guard over the weaponry at Ya'jaj Valley, outside of Makkah, so they could come and perform their own pilgrimage.

In this way, the Prophet (PBBUH) and his Companions completed their pilgrimage to the Sacred House, secure and with no fear; some had their heads shaved, and others had their head hair cut short, just as the Prophet (PBBUH) had seen in his dream.

The Three-Day Stay at Makkah

On the next day of `Umrah, the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) came back to the Ka`bah and remained until *Zuhr* (Noon) Prayer. He (PBBUH) instructed Bilal to call out the Azan on the roof of the Ka`bah, then led two thousand Muslims in prayer in front of the Sacred House, where he (PBBUH) had been forbidden from praying for several years.

The Muslims remained in Makkah for three days, unharmed, as Al-Hudaibiyah Treaty specified. The emigrants among them visited their old dwellings and shared with Al-Ansar the memories which the place recalled to their minds.

On this visit, the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) married Maimunah bint Al-Harith, the sister of Umm Al-Fadl, the wife of `Abbas bin Abdul-Muttalib, who was the Prophet's (PBBUH) uncle and the one who married her to him. When the three-day period had elapsed, Suhail ibn `Amr came to the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) with a group of the Quraysh to make him leave Makkah. They said, "Your appointed time is over, so depart from us." The Prophet (PBBUH), anxious to prolong his stay at Makkah in the hope that its people would become persuaded to embrace Islam, replied, **"I have married a woman from among you. What would it hurt you if you allowed me to stay, so that I can have my marriage in your midst, and prepare food (a banquet) for you to attend?"**

But fearing that his followers would increase the longer he (PBBUH) stayed, the Quraysh responded with a harsh refusal, “We have no need for your food, so depart from us.”

The Prophet (PBBUH) complied with their request and gave orders for departure. The Muslims offered a farewell circumambulation of the Ka`bah before departing Makkah. As the Prophet (PBBUH) was leaving Makkah, Umarah, the daughter of Hamzah, who had been martyred at the Battle of Uhud, ran after him shouting, “O my uncle! O my uncle!” Umarah was a young girl at the time. She embraced Islam and wanted to join him in Madinah.

Addressing his Companions, the Prophet (PBBUH) said, “**Why should we leave the daughter of our paternal cousin an orphan among the *Mushrikin*?**” Three major Companions – `Ali, Zaid, and Ja`far – vied for custody of her, each of them wanting the honor of hosting her and looking after her¹. The Prophet (PBBUH) kindly intervened and ended the disagreement by giving custody of the child to the closest blood relatives to her – her maternal aunt, who was Ja`far’s wife. He (PBBUH) clarified the basis of his judgment, saying, “**A maternal aunt is of the same status as the mother.**”

Back to Madinah

Before heading back, the Muslims recovered the weapons that had been kept for emergency at Ya`jaj Valley, and then marched homeward to Madinah. All of them were profoundly influenced by the experience of the Compensatory `Umrah they had gone through. The same influence was keenly felt by the people of Makkah and members of the Quraysh. Sooner than imagined, the event began winning over some of the most powerful and prominent men of Makkah to the cause of Islam.

¹ Clearly, a radical change had occurred in the outlook of men on rearing daughters and females generally. Just decades previously, women were frowned upon as a disgrace, and daughters were buried alive. A gigantic leap was taken by Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) in redressing their wrongs, restoring their position, and reclaiming their rights within the short span of time since the advent of Islam.

Khalid ibn Al-Walid, `Amr ibn Al-`As, and `Uthman ibn Talhah Come to Madinah as Muslims

The safety and security with which the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) and his Companions entered and exited Makkah and performed `Umrah occupied the thoughts of Khalid ibn Al-Walid.

It was time for him to pause and reflect. In the long, relentless rounds of conflict between the Quraysh and the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH), he (PBBUH) was always divinely protected and supported. In the Battle of Badr, Muslims received victory from Allah Almighty despite their small numbers. In the Battle of Uhud, they were on the verge of victory, and would have prevailed had it not been for the confusion caused by the archers when they disobeyed orders and abandoned their post, which allowed Khalid to cleverly take advantage of their mistake by circling around Aynain Mount and launching a surprise attack. Nevertheless, the Quraysh did not achieve victory. The Messenger of Allah (PBBUH), along with a few of his Companions, endured and maintained steadfastness on the battlefield until the Quraysh were compelled to retreat and flee.

Again, the same occurred in the Battle of Al-Ahzab. Victory was on the side of the believers. Allah (Exalted be He) dispersed the Quraysh, and all their confederate forces, with a violent wind and severe cold that forced them to retreat. Each time, the Quraysh suffered defeat, were put to shame, and received neither help nor protection from their ancestral idols. All this exposed before them the powerlessness of their gods, and therefore the falsity of their religion, and demonstrated Allah's Sovereignty.

This last time, here was the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) right in Makkah. He (PBBUH) entered it with dignity and grace, performed `Umrah along with his Companions, and exited safely. And day by day, his followers were increasing.

The more Khalid thought about the matter, the more the reality of it became clear and undeniable in his mind. During a gathering of the *Mushrikin*, he proceeded to speak out loud to them what he was thinking, and what many Makkans were beginning to realize inside: “It must by now have become clear to every person of sound mind that Muhammad (PBBUH) is neither a magician nor a poet, and that his words are from the (own) Words of the Lord of existence. It, therefore, behooves every intelligent person to follow him.”

The announcement that Khalid made was met with panic and vehement protest, particularly from Abu Sufyan, `Ikrimah, the son of Abu Jahl, and others who heard him. They were almost going to assault him, but `Ikrimah held them back, and said, “Wait! By Allah, I too fear what you fear. That I will say what Khalid has said and that I will follow his religion. By Allah, I fear that a year will not pass by before all the people of Makkah follow him.”

Khalid Seeks and Finds Traveling Companions

Khalid resolved to set out for Madinah to meet the Prophet (PBBUH) and embrace Islam in his presence. He sought others who wanted to take this journey with him. He spoke to Safwan and `Ikrimah and was turned down by both.

Khalid then came across `Uthman ibn Talhah, the custodian of the key to the Ka`bah, and proposed to him that they join the Prophet (PBBUH) in Madinah. He said to him what he had said earlier to Safwan and `Ikrimah, “Do you not see that Muhammad is gaining the upper hand over both the Arabs and the non-Arabs? If we (too) go to him and follow him, his honor will be our honor.” `Uthman agreed instantly to go with him, and the two decided to accompany each other to Madinah.

On the road, they met `Amr ibn Al-`As, who asked them, “To where are you heading?” They replied, “To enter into Islam.” `Amr replied, “That is the same reason why I have come.” Finding that they all shared the same purpose, the three of them, together, carried on their journey to Madinah until they arrived at the outskirts of Madinah, where they stopped to change into their best clothes.

Khalid and His Companions in the Presence of the Prophet (PBBUH)

When the three men entered Madinah, they hastened their pace to reach the Prophet (PBBUH), who was informed of their arrival and became very pleased.

Khalid went in advance of his two companions and said, "Peace be upon you O Messenger of Allah."

His face beaming with a smile. The Prophet (PBBUH) replied to his greeting. Khalid then said, "Verily, I bear witness that there is no god but Allah and that you are the Messenger of Allah."

The Prophet (PBBUH) said, "**All praise be to Allah Who has guided you (to Islam). I always saw in you an intelligence which I hoped would lead you only to what is good.**"

Khalid said, "O Messenger of Allah, ask Allah to forgive me for (all) those battles in which I stood against you."

He (PBBUH) replied, "**Islam erases whatever (sins) came before it.**"

Next, `Amr ibn Al-`As and `Uthman ibn Talhah stepped forward and pronounced their testimony of faith before the Prophet (PBBUH). These three prominent and influential men of the Quraysh coming into Islam brought great joy to the Muslims, a joy only matched by the joy they felt when `Umar ibn Al-Khattab embraced Islam in Makkah.

Many other Makkans were encouraged because of them and also embraced Islam, which added more strength to Islam and made the future opening of Makkah a certainty.

The Battle of Mu'tah

In order to prevent acts of aggression, the Prophet (PBBUH) had to establish a significant presence of Muslims in the area. According to historical accounts, Mu'tah was a *Sariyya* (an expedition undertaken by command of the Prophet (PBBUH), but carried out without his personal participation).

It was fought in Jumada First of the 8th year of Hijrah, near the town of Mu'tah (located near the Karak district in Jordan), and was a prelude to the subsequent conquest of the Levant.

The Cause of the Battle

The killing of the Prophet's (PBBUH) envoy to the ruler of Busra, Al-Harith ibn Umair Al-Azdi, was the direct cause of this battle. When Al-Harith arrived at Mu'tah, he immediately found his way barred by Shurahbil Al-Ghassani, one of the governors of the Byzantine Emperor over Balqa district (east of what is now Jordan) and the King of the Ghassanids. When he found out that Al-Harith was an envoy from the Prophet (PBBUH), he tied him up and killed him.

The Prophet (PBBUH) took what happened as a clear declaration of war and decided to answer with firmness.

Preparations for Fighting, and the Prophet (PBBUH) Directs the Army with Advice

To respond adequately to this challenge for war, the Prophet (PBBUH) mobilized a large army consisting of three thousand men. It included Khalid ibn Al-Walid, who was participating as an ordinary soldier.

The Prophet (PBBUH) appointed Zaid ibn Harithah as commander of the army, and named two others to successively take command if the commander in charge should die, and said, **"If Zaid is killed, then Ja'far** (should take over the leadership of the army). **If Ja'far is killed, then `Abdullah bin Rawahah**

(should take over). **If he is killed, let the Muslims agree upon a man from among them and make him their leader.**” The order in which the Prophet (PBBUH) organized the assumption of leadership meant he anticipated that two of them, at the very least, would be martyred during the coming battle.

The Prophet (PBBUH) instructed the army to go to Mu'tah, to the same place where Al-Harith ibn Umair Al-Azdi had been martyred, and invite the people who lived there to Islam. If they accepted the invitation, all well and good, and the matter would end there. But if they rejected the invitation, they should turn to Allah for help and proceed to fight them.

The Prophet (PBBUH) exhorted Zaid and the rest of the army to stay committed to the essential aim and ethics of fighting in battle, saying, **“Fight in the Name of Allah and in the Cause of Allah those who disbelieve in Allah. Do not commit treachery. Do not embezzle (booty). Do not mutilate. Do not kill a child, or a woman, or an aged man, or a recluse in a hermitage. Do not go near a date palm, or cut down a tree, or destroy a building.”**

In short, fighting in Islam must be limited in scope and confined to combatants and must not include acts of wanton cruelty. It strictly prohibits harm to civilians and damage to the environment.

Bidding Farewell to the Army

The morale of the Muslim soldiers was very high. As they were ready to leave, the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) accompanied them as far as Thaniyat Al-Wada` (the Valley of Farewell)¹ to bid them farewell. The Prophet (PBBUH), as well as the rest of the Muslims, said goodbye to them with this supplication: **“May Allah accompany you, defend you, and bring you back to us righteous.”**

The day the Prophet (PBBUH) ordered the expedition to set out was a Friday. Early in the morning, all the army marched out, except for `Abdullah ibn

¹ As its name indicates, it was the traditional place to bid farewell to travelling loved ones.

Rawahah. He told his companions that he would stay behind to offer Friday Prayer with the Prophet (PBBUH) and then join them. When the Prophet (PBBUH) saw that `Abdullah ibn Rawahah had offered the congregational prayer with him and had not yet gone out with his companions, he asked him, **“What prevented you from setting out early in the morning with your companions?”** `Abdullah replied, “I wanted to pray with you and then join them.” To that, the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) said, **“Even if you spent all that is on the earth, you would never attain the merit earned by their (your companions) setting out early in the morning.”** `Abdullah ibn Rawahah set off at a hurried pace until he caught up with them.

Marching forth to Gain a Surprise Attack Advantage on the Enemy

The Muslim troops marched forth thinking that their opponents in this battle would be the Ghassanids. Army leaders were set on basing their tactics on a strategy the Prophet (PBBUH) had often used in his previous expeditions – to catch the enemy forces by surprise to forestall them in action and accelerate victory.

The Muslims arrived and camped at Ma`an (today a province in Jordan) where important news reached them about the high level of military strength and preparedness of the enemy. Shurahbil ibn `Amr, on receiving intelligence of the march of the Muslims, amassed a huge army of one hundred thousand fighters from the surrounding allied Arab tribes of Lakhm, Judham, Bahra', and Bali. Shurahbil also sent word to Heraclius asking for reinforcements, and he responded by mobilizing an additional force of one hundred thousand Byzantine warriors. And so, an enormous army totaling two hundred thousand men, well-armed and ready for battle, was gathered at Ma`ab land in Al-Balqa', close to the position of the Muslim army.

The Muslim force opposing this great multitude consisted of only three thousand men. According to numerical calculations, this made victory for the Muslims virtually impossible.

Muslims Consult Together to Decide the Best Course of Action

The Muslims had never considered that they would encounter such a huge army. For two days, they pondered and debated about what to do. Some of them suggested conveying the situation to the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH). They said, “We should write to the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) to inform him about the number of our enemy. Either he will reinforce us with men, or he will command us to go ahead with what he has ordered us to do.”

Just as this opinion was about to prevail, `Abdullah ibn Rawahah rose and voiced his disagreement with it on the grounds that any delay in engaging with the enemy risked giving the impression that the Muslims were terrified of them. Delay would certainly heighten the confidence of the enemy and, in addition, cause the morale of the Muslims to collapse.

`Abdullah ibn Rawahah reminded them that victory could only be accomplished through Allah’s enablement. He motivated them to move forward and strive for the best results, saying, “O people, by Allah, what you hate (now) is the very thing you came out seeking: martyrdom. We do not fight the enemy with numbers, or strength, or multitude; we fight them only with (the power of) this religion, with which Allah has honored us. So, go forward, for only one of two good endings can happen: either victory or martyrdom.”

Ibn Rawahah saw the situation in its proper perspective. Everybody approved; “By Allah, Ibn Rawahah has spoken the truth,” was the resounding response to his call for fearlessly going ahead and fighting the fight. His courage was contagious, and soon the entire army became just as enthusiastic and determined as he was.

The Muslims resumed their advance until they encountered the army of Heraclius at a village of Al-Balqa’ called Masharif. When the enemy troops drew near, Zaid ibn Al-Harithah saw that the present hilly terrain they were in would be disadvantageous for them. So, he changed direction to the village of Mu’tah, which gave them a strategically fortified position. A fierce battle then raged in

this area between the army of Heraclius, which numbered over two hundred thousand men, and a force of a mere three thousand Muslims.

The Beginning of Fighting and the Martyrdom of Zaid, Ja`far, and Ibn Rawahah

Zaid ibn Al-Harithah took the banner of the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) in his hand and fought with utmost steadfastness and gallantry until he was killed by the spears of the enemy. Ja`far ibn Abi Talib then picked up the banner in his place, and, while bearing it, continued to fight courageously. He killed many soldiers of the combined Byzantine and Ghassanid forces; and when he penetrated deep into their ranks and became besieged by the enemy, with no way out, he jumped off his horse, killed it, and resumed the fight on foot. He kept fighting while holding aloft the banner of the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) in his right hand until it was cut off. He then took the banner in his left hand until it, too, was cut off. He then hugged it with his upper arms, embracing it against his chest and leaning over it to keep it raised until he was martyred. It was narrated that a Byzantine warrior struck him a blow that cut him in half.

According to Prophet Muhammad (PBBUH), Allah compensated Ja`far by replacing his arms with two wings with which he can fly wherever he wishes in Paradise. He was therefore called "*Ja`far Al-Tayyar* (Ja`far the Flying)" or "the Flying Martyr." When his body was found among the dead, it had over ninety stab and arrow wounds, and yet—remarkably—not a single one of those injuries was in his back (i.e., all of them were on the front of his body).

Then came the turn of `Abdullah ibn Rawahah to seize the banner. He bore it high again and charged the enemy with all his force. After fighting valiantly, he too was killed.

The Banner is Taken Up by One of the Swords of Allah

After the martyrdom of the three commanders appointed by the Prophet (PBBUH), a veteran from Banu `Ajlan, named Thabit ibn Aqram, picked up the

banner and called upon the Muslims to decide upon the next leader, saying, “O Muslims, agree on a man from among you.” They said, “You!” But he declined (as he saw that there was someone more capable than himself to take over). The worth of Khalid ibn Al-Walid as an army leader was well known to all; therefore, he was unanimously chosen to be their next leader.

The Prophet (PBBUH) Provides a Live Account of What Is Happening on the Battlefield of Mu`tah

Meanwhile, back in Madinah, the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) ascended the pulpit and called out for the people to gather so he could inform them of what was taking place at that moment in Mu`tah, as clearly and certainly as if he had been watching proceedings closely (on a big screen). He (PBBUH) said, **“I will inform you about your army that set out for the battle. They proceeded forward and met with the enemy. Zaid died a martyr, so ask for forgiveness for him. Then Ja`far took the banner. He fought strongly against the people (i.e., the enemy) until he also died a martyr, so ask for forgiveness for him. Then `Abdullah bin Rawahah took the banner. He planted his feet firmly (on the battlefield and fought bravely) until he died a martyr.”** With eyes full of tears, the Prophet (PBBUH) continued, **“Then the banner was taken over by one of the Swords of Allah (meaning Khalid) until Allah granted them victory.”**

From that day forward, Khalid ibn Al-Walid was named *Saifullah Al-Maslul* (the Drawn Sword of Allah).

A Calculated Manoeuvre Devised by Khalid Brings the Battle to an End

Khalid ibn Al-Walid took over the banner. He was a very skilled commander, capable of making correct independent strategic decisions as well as effectively directing an army on the battlefield. He had a plan in mind, and he actively started carrying it out. He first began to reorganize and regroup the Muslim forces until he had brought the army fully under his control.

He allowed only skirmishes with the enemy in order to gain time until night fell, and the two armies had retired to prepare for the next day's battle.

Khalid discerned that to continue would bring about complete annihilation of his army. So, he devised a shrewd plan to effect a safe withdrawal of all Muslim troops back to Madinah, with the least possible number of casualties. Basically, his plan relied on deceiving the enemy into thinking that fresh reinforcements had arrived to strengthen the Muslim army. He created the illusion of reinforcements by implementing the following tactics:

1. He ordered a considerable section of the army to form themselves into a long line at the back of the army and, while these troop movements were taking place, to raise thick dust at the rear and make loud noises to give the impression that massive reinforcements were joining up with them.
2. He changed the order of his troops, moving the soldiers on the right flank to the left and vice versa, and those in the front changed places with those in the back.
3. He improved the appearance of the soldiers and changed their banners.

The plan worked perfectly. When the next morning dawned and the two armies faced each other, the combined enemy forces felt that they were confronting a new army. Connecting what they saw with other ongoing observed actions, they were misled into assuming that the Muslim troops had received reinforcements.

Such a sudden development dampened their spirit. On the first day alone, the three thousand Muslim fighters had inflicted great damage to their forces and killed many of them. Additional troops, whose exact number was unknown to them, might have the capacity to tilt the balance in favor of the Muslims, making it possible for them to win the battle. Therefore, the Byzantines held back from attacking Khalid.

Khalid did not allow the enemy forces time to recover from their initial surprise. He launched a fierce attack along the front line, which caused much confusion and chaos in the enemy army. As a result, they retreated, putting some distance between themselves and the Muslims. Khalid kept attacking bravely until nine swords had broken in his hand, and he was left with only a Yemeni shield.

Khalid then took advantage of the situation and began the process of making a full, but gradual, retreat from the battlefield while maintaining the order of the army.

The Byzantines did not pursue the Muslim troops, as they suspected they were being lured into a death trap where they would be caught in the vast desert. Consequently, the Muslims managed to retreat safely to Madinah with minimal losses.

The Number of Those Killed, on Both Sides

According to historians, twelve Muslim men were martyred, and more than two hundred Byzantine men were killed.

The Returning Muslim Army is Shouted at with “Runaways!”

Khalid and his army departed Mu'tah after having done the best that could be done under the circumstances. Khalid succeeded in saving the army from certain defeat and destruction by rapidly attacking and tactically retreating almost simultaneously. But upon approaching Madinah, without booty or other manifestations of victory, they were viewed by the Muslims who came out to meet them as runaways from the battle. They started throwing dust at them while shouting at them, “O you runaways! Have you fled from (fighting in) Allah’s Way!” The Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) was among the people riding towards the returning soldiers to welcome them back. He (PBBUH) stopped the shouting, saying in their defense, **“They are not runaways; they are those who retreat only to advance again** (i.e., resume fighting later on), **with Allah’s Will.”**

The Prophet (PBBUH) was deeply grieved over the martyrs of Mu`tah, especially Zaid, who was known among the people as the Beloved One of the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH), and Ja`far who bore the closest resemblance to him (PBBUH) in both form and character.

The Important Outcomes of Mu`tah

Although no manifest victory occurred at the Battle of Mu`tah, its real influence was in its ensuing impact. The Byzantine Empire was a force to be reckoned with and to be feared in the region. The Arabs thought of it as unconquerable; to defy it was to face annihilation. It was astounding, therefore, for the Arabs to learn that a little army of just three thousand Muslim men had engaged in fierce fighting with the Byzantines, with their massive military advantages in manpower, equipment, and regional backing, and then returned from such a battle with minimal losses.

Through this last confrontation, it became clear to all tribes that what made Muslims so powerful was that they were backed by Allah (Exalted be He). These people were unique; they were not giving up and were emerging triumphant despite impossible odds, which propelled hostile Arab tribes towards Islam. As a result, Islam spread widely in the north of the Arabian Peninsula.

Mu`tah was a forerunner of subsequent battles with the Byzantines. It prepared the way for the conquest of the cities under Byzantine rule and the winning of their people to Islam.

Expeditions and Delegations Continue

The Prophet (PBBUH) continued to dispatch expeditions and delegations to consolidate and strengthen the position of the Muslims and fight off any attacks on them from surrounding tribes.

The Opening of Makkah

A period of two years had elapsed since the concluding of Al-Hudaibiyah Treaty. In that time, the power of Islam had become more firmly established, the number of its followers had greatly increased, and its message had continued to spread, reaching the rulers and kings of the earth at the time.

Circumstances were thus developing in support of the manifest victory promised by Allah to His Servant Muhammad (PBBUH). This promise says: “Verily, We have given you (O Muhammad) a manifest victory.” (Al-Fath 48:1)

When Allah (Glorified be He) decrees that something will come to pass, He furnishes the means of accomplishing it and removes impediments from its way. Almighty Allah paved the way for the great victory of Makkah to reinforce His Religion and His Messenger (PBBUH) and convince multitudes of people to believe in Him.

The Principal Cause of the Expedition to Makkah: Breach of Al-Hudaibiyah Treaty by the Quraysh

Included in Al-Hudaibiyah Treaty was the provision that allowed any tribe to join the pact of either side – the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) or the Quraysh – and subsequently become part of the party they had decided to join. Any act of aggression made against them would be tantamount to an attack on the party with which they had allied. On the basis of this provision, the Khuza`ah tribe became allies of the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) and Banu Bakr became allies of the Quraysh.

These two tribes, Khuza`ah and Banu Bakr, had long-standing feuds and blood revenges between them from pre-Islam, which were suspended on account of the new agreement of Al-Hudaibiyah. Each tribe felt temporarily secure from the other, but Banu Bakr decided otherwise. With the mighty power of the

Quraysh on their side, they sought to exploit the peace truce that was in force to settle an old score with the Khuza`ah tribe.

As the Khuza`ah were camping at a water place called Al-Watir, Banu Bakr launched a night attack on them and massacred nearly twenty of their tribesmen. The Quraysh aided Banu Bakr in this raid with weapons, and some members of the Quraysh fought along with them under the cover of darkness, with their identity concealed. Among the leading personalities of the Quraysh who fought alongside Banu Bakr were Safwan ibn Umayyah, Suhayl ibn `Amr, and `Ikrimah ibn Abu Jahl.

The rest of the Khuza`ah group had been caught unprepared for war and were being driven to take refuge in the sanctuary of Makkah. Banu Bakr continued pursuing the Khuza`ah tribesmen and, in yet another brutal move, contravening all the rules of appropriate conduct within the sanctuary, they attacked and killed some of them in the sacred precincts.

The provision of military aid and the participation of the Quraysh in this vengeful attack against the Khuza`ah tribe constituted a flagrant violation of the terms of their treaty with the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH).

The Khuz`ah Tribe Seeks the Aid of the Prophet (PBBUH)

After falling under attack by Banu Bakr, aided by the Quraysh, the Khuza`ah group fled to Makkah and took refuge in the house of Budayl ibn Warqa' Al-Khuza`i. They complained to him of the attack committed against them by the Quraysh and their allies, Banu Bakr, in violation of their treaty with the Prophet (PBBUH).

One tribesman, `Amr ibn Salim Al-Khuza`i, who arrived on the scene, immediately rode off to the Prophet (PBBUH) at Madinah to inform him of the plight that had befallen the Khuza`ah tribe.

`Amr ibn Salim stood and gave an account of what had happened, while the Prophet (PBBUH) was in the mosque sitting among the people. `Amr, who was a poet, began reciting eloquent lines of poetry to the Prophet (PBBUH) through which he pleaded for his help.

`Amr concluded the last verse of his poetry, expressing their predicament with these moving words:

They attacked us at Al-Watir while we were praying at night,

Killing us while we were bowing and prostrating ourselves

With tears in his eyes, the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) said to him in assurance, **“You have attained help, O `Amr ibn Salim.”** According to another narration, his answer was, **“By the One in Whose Hand is my soul, I shall defend them in the same way I would defend myself and my household.”**

Shortly after, Budayl ibn Warqa' Al-Khuza`i arrived in Madinah with a group of men from Khuza`ah, and the news of the attack and killings was unequivocally confirmed. The delegation recounted to the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) the evil that had befallen them from Banu Bakr; how their fellow tribesmen were killed unawares and how the Quraysh supported Banu Bakr against them.

The Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) assured them of his support and ordered them to return to Makkah and disperse themselves in the valleys in order to hide their coming to him from the eyes of the Quraysh. The Khuza`ah delegation was pleased with the response they received from the Prophet (PBBUH). They understood that he (PBBUH) had a plan in mind which he wanted them to keep a secret. They departed. Acting upon the Prophet's (PBBUH) directions, some took the coastal road, and some took the main road.

The Prophet (PBBUH) resolved that such an aggressive breach of Al-Hudaibiyah Treaty by the Quraysh must be met with no less than the Conquest of Makkah. He (PBBUH) came in to `Aishah and said, **“A serious incident occurred to the Khuza`ah.”** She asked, “O Messenger of Allah, do you think that

the Quraysh would dare to break the treaty between you and them?” He (PBBUH) replied, **“They would break the treaty for a purpose that Allah desires** (to bring it about through this breaking of the agreement).”

Gripped by Fear of the Consequences of Their Hostilities, the Quraysh Dispatch Abu Sufyan to Repair the Treaty

The judicious and wise elders of the Quraysh had a different view. They realized the danger to which they had become exposed as a result of the actions perpetrated by the youth of the Quraysh. What they did was not only hateful, but also treacherous and dishonest. Undeniably to them and everyone else, the Prophet’s (PBBUH) authority in the peninsula was on the rise, and becoming stronger and wider. Meanwhile, their own force remained stagnant. Should he (PBBUH) decide to avenge the attack on the Khuza`ah tribe, their regime in Makkah would face serious danger of collapse.

These senior members of the Quraysh urgently convened a consultation meeting. They decided to send their leader, Abu Sufyan, as their representative to shore up the treaty’s credibility and seek its extension.

Abu Sufyan set out for Madinah to take some quick measures to remedy the breach before serious consequences occurred. Before arriving at his destination, he met Budayl ibn Warqa’ Al-Khuza`i and some members of the delegation near `Urfan as they were heading back; the rest had dispersed themselves in small groups as they had been ordered. Abu Sufyan asked Budayl, “Where have you come from, O Budayl?” For he suspected that Budayl had gone to see the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH). Budayl replied, “I was traveling with the Khuza`ah along the coast and along the bottom of this valley.” Abu Sufyan again enquired, “Did you not go to Muhammad?” and Budayl answered him with, “No.”

After Budayl and his companions left him and continued on their journey to Makkah, Abu Sufyan picked up some of their camel droppings and examined them. In them, he found date kernels, which were the special fodder for camels

in Madinah. This indicated to him that they must have gone to Madinah and fed their animals there. Affected by what he had discovered, he said to himself, “I swear by Allah, Budayl went to Muhammad!”

Abu Sufyan’s Intervention Attempt Ends Up a Failure

Abu Sufyan did not doubt that Budayl had been to Madinah to see the Prophet (PBBUH). Therefore, upon first arriving at Madinah, he preferred not to go and meet the Prophet (PBBUH) directly. Instead, he went to the house of his daughter, Umm Habibah. She was the wife of the Prophet (PBBUH) and one of the Mothers of all Believers.

As Abu Sufyan was going to sit down on the Prophet’s (PBBUH) mat, Umm Habibah folded it up to prevent him from doing so. His pride hurt, he said, “O my daughter, I hardly know whether you think I am too good for this mat or you think it is too good for me.” Her straightforward reply was, “This mat belongs to the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH), and you are an impure polytheist.”

Abu Sufyan became angry and said to his daughter, “By Allah, evil has befallen you since you left me,” and he left the house enraged.

Abu Sufyan then went and spoke to the Prophet (PBBUH) about renewing the treaty, but he (PBBUH) gave him no answer at all. He then sought the mediation of Abu Bakr and `Umar ibn Al-Khattab, both of whom declined to interfere.

Lastly, Abu Sufyan approached `Ali ibn Abu Talib. He was the most lenient of all those whom he asked for intercession with the Prophet (PBBUH). Present with him was Fatimah, the Prophet’s (PBBUH) daughter, and their son Al-Hassan, who was still a young child crawling before her. Abu Sufyan requested his intercession with the Prophet (PBBUH) on their behalf, to which `Ali replied, “Woe to you, Abu Sufyan! The Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) has decided upon a matter about which we cannot talk to him.”

Abu Sufyan then turned to Fatimah and said, "O daughter of Muhammad, would you order this son of yours (pointing to Al-Hassan) to act as a peacemaker between the people (and grant protection), so that he may become the sovereign of the Arabs forever?" Fatimah replied, "By Allah, this son of mine is not yet old enough to mediate between the people and grant them protection, and no one can grant protection against the will of the Messenger of Allah."

The situation was getting more desperate for Abu Sufyan. In one last attempt to save the treaty, he said to `Ali, "O Abu Al-Hassan, I see that matters have become difficult for me. Give me advice!"

`Ali said to him, "By Allah, I know of nothing that would be of any avail to you, but you are the chief of Banu Kinanah, so go ahead and proclaim peace and protection (on behalf of the Quraysh) among the people, and then return to your land."

Abu Sufyan asked, "Do you think that this will be of any use to me?"

`Ali replied, "By Allah, I do not think so, but I cannot find anything else for you to do."

Left with no other recourse, Abu Sufyan did as `Ali suggested. He stood in the courtyard of the Prophet's (PBBUH) Mosque and proclaimed, "O people, I grant protection among the people." He then mounted his camel and rode off to Makkah, his heart burdened with grief for the disgrace he had sustained.

When Abu Sufyan returned to Makkah and told the Quraysh everything that had happened to him in Madinah, and how he had followed the counsel that `Ali gave to him by standing in the mosque and proclaiming peace and protection among the people, they asked him, "Has Muhammad approved this (i.e., has he acknowledged the protection that you gave and ordered his followers to respect it)?" Abu Sufyan replied, "No." His tribesmen felt that `Ali had just made a fool of him and reproachfully said, "Woe to you! The man did no more than toy with you!" Abu Sufyan said, "By Allah, I could find nothing else to do."

Carrying on with the Preparations for the Opening of Makkah

Meanwhile, the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) proceeded with the preparations for the march to Makkah. He (PBBUH) ordered his Companions to be ready, but kept the destination a secret. His plan was to leave no time for the Quraysh to prepare themselves for their encounter with him. He (PBBUH) wanted to surprise them before they were aware of his advance, in order to achieve complete surrender and victory without bloodshed.

To achieve this peaceful takeover of Makkah, the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) sent out a summons to all the Bedouins living in the vicinity to come to Madinah. Muslims of the tribes of Aslam, Ghifar, Muzaynah, Juhaynah, Ashja`, and Sulaim quickly complied and began assembling in Madinah, until a Muslim army of ten thousand men was gathered.

Top secrecy was the vital component for the success of this mission. The Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) took the necessary steps to maintain secrecy about the army being mobilized and prevent leakage of information to the Quraysh, so that their men would not be able to organize themselves properly or devise a counter plan. He (PBBUH) then turned to Allah (Glorified be He) with a supplication to accomplish what human effort alone could never accomplish. He (PBBUH) said, **“O Allah, keep away the spies and news from the Quraysh until we take them by surprise in their land.”**

In addition to obscuring news, the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) used another tactic to divert attention and disguise the fact that Makkah was the planned destination of his upcoming expedition. He (PBBUH) dispatched an eight-man unit, under the leadership of Qatadah ibn Rabi`ah, towards Adham Valley on the first of Ramadan of the year 8 A.H.

Such a move created the assumption that he (PBBUH) was heading somewhere other than Makkah. The unit of eight men continued their march, and once they arrived at Adham, news reached them that the Messenger of Allah

(PBBUH) had set out for Makkah. So, they changed direction and caught up with him.

Intercepting a Letter Written by Hatib Disclosing Information to the Quraysh

Despite the secrecy surrounding the expedition, some people were able to guess that its area of action would indeed be Makkah. It was a logical inference based on observed facts, such as the violation of the treaty by the Quraysh, the arrival of the delegates from the Khuza`ah imploring defense and support, the coming of Abu Sufyan in an attempt to patch up the broken treaty, and, above all, the size of the Muslim army being prepared.

Among those who correctly guessed the strategic goal of the next expedition was Hatib ibn Abu Balta`ah. Once the preparations for it were completed, Hatib wrote a letter to the Quraysh informing them of the resolve of the Prophet (PBBUH) to march against them. The motive for Hatib doing so was to preserve his own personal interests. He was living away from Makkah and wanted to ensure that his family members there would remain unharmed.

Hatib handed the letter containing this important information about the expedition to a woman and paid her to deliver it to the Quraysh. The woman concealed the letter in her hair by knotting plaits around it. Then, she departed for Makkah.

Hatib's actions were disclosed by divine revelation to the Prophet (PBBUH). He (PBBUH) sent `Ali, Al-Zubair, and Al-Miqdad to intercept the letter before it reached the Quraysh. He (PBBUH) instructed them, saying, **“Proceed until you reach the garden of Khakh, where you will find a woman traveling on a camel. She has a letter with her (for the Quraysh). Take it from her.”**

The three of them set out, their horses galloping at full speed, until they found the woman at the exact place indicated by the Prophet (PBBUH). They

stopped her and made her dismount. At first the woman denied having any letter, but she ended it up pulling it out of her plaits and handing it over after `Ali threatened that they would search her personally for it.

The Prophet (PBBUH) Pardons Hatib

The letter disclosing to the Quraysh information about the forthcoming expedition was thus brought and handed to the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH). He (PBBUH) summoned Hatib to ask him the reason that induced him to do what he did.

The Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) asked, **“O Hatib, what made you do this?”** Hatib replied, “O Messenger of Allah, do not be hasty in judging me. By Allah, I believe in Allah and His Messenger, and I have neither renounced nor altered my faith. I am a man who merely relates to the Quraysh as an outside ally. I am not one of their own. I have family, clan members, and children who live among them (the Makkans), but I lack any kinsmen belonging to them (the Qurayshites) who may protect them. So, I wanted to recompense for my lacking blood relation with them by doing them a favor so that they might protect my relatives.”

The Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) said to his Companions who were present with him, **“He (Hatib) has told you the truth.”**

`Umar, furious about what Hatib had done, said, “O Messenger of Allah, allow me to strike his neck, for he has betrayed Allah and His Messenger and played the hypocrite.” The Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) replied to `Umar, **“Verily, he participated in Badr. How do you know (O `Umar)? Perhaps Allah looked at the people of Badr (i.e., the Muslims who witnessed the Battle of Badr) and said, ‘Do what you like, for I have forgiven you.’”**

Because of past good deeds performed by Hatib, the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) accepted his reason and pardoned him. Following this incident,

Allah the Almighty revealed the Qur’anic verse stating, “O you who believe, do not take My enemies and your enemies as allies..” (Al-Mumtahanah 60:1)

In this way, Allah (Glorified be He) prevented the news from leaking to the Quraysh, and they remained unaware of the arrangements being made for the great march to Makkah.

The Muslim Army Starts the March for the Grand Opening of Makkah

On the 10th of Ramadan 8 A.H., after completing all preparation work and planning, the Prophet (PBBUH) placed Abu Ruhm Kulthum ibn Husayn Al-Ghifari in charge of Madinah and proceeded to Makkah at the head of a massive army, joined by several neighboring Muslim tribes.

As the army advanced towards Makkah, it continued to gather numbers and force until it reached ten thousand soldiers. In terms of size and strength, this army was unprecedented in the history of the Arabs. It also had another exceptional and unprecedented trait — the strength of spirit of its men. They fully trusted in Allah and His Support. They felt confident that the great victory of Makkah was approaching — and without bloodshed.

The Departure of the Clan of Banu Hashim and Their Entry into Islam

Whether anticipating or being informed about the setting out of the Prophet (PBBUH) towards Makkah, some members of Banu Hashim, the Prophet’s (PBBUH) own clan, decided to join him (PBBUH) and declare their acceptance of Islam before his entry into Makkah to avoid facing the consequences of their past wrongdoing against him (PBBUH).

They were his paternal cousin Abu Sufyan ibn Al-Harith ibn `Abdul-Muttalib¹ (the brother of `Ubaidah ibn Al-Harith, martyred at Badr) and his brother-in-law and maternal cousin, `Abdullah ibn Umayyah ibn Al-Mughirah (the brother of his wife Umm Salamah). These two Hashimite relatives of the Prophet (PBBUH) ranked among his worst enemies.

Upon reaching Al-Abwa, the Prophet (PBBUH) met these two cousins of his on the road. He (PBBUH) turned away from them because of the vicious defamation and ridicule they had both inflicted upon him. They sought permission to talk with him, but he (PBBUH) refused.

After being apprised of the Prophet's (PBBUH) refusal to meet them, Abu Sufyan ibn Al-Harith, who had his little son with him, said, "By Allah, he (PBBUH) shall give me permission, or I will take hold of the hand of this son of mine, and we will go into the wilderness until we die of thirst and hunger."

Advising Abu Sufyan ibn Al-Harith, `Ali said, "Go before the face of the Prophet (PBBUH) and beg his pardon in the same words that the brothers of Yusuf (Prophet Joseph, PBBUH) said to him. *They said: By Allah! Indeed, Allah has preferred you above us, and we certainly have been sinners.*' (Yusuf 12:91) For he (PBBUH) does not like anyone to be kinder in words than him."

Abu Sufyan ibn Al-Harith acted according to the advice of `Ali, and the situation cleared up. The Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) softened and replied (quoting the words of Prophet Joseph, PBBUH, to his brothers), "*No reproach on you this day, may Allah forgive you, and He is the Most Merciful of those who show mercy!*" (Yusuf 12:91-92)

After obtaining this magnanimous pardon, despite the serious harm they had caused, both cousins embraced Islam.

¹ Not to be confused with Abu Sufyan ibn Harb, the chief of the Quraysh pagan forces.

When the Prophet (PBBUH) was at Al-Juhfah, he was met by his uncle Al-`Abbas ibn `Abdul-Muttalib. He had come out to Makkah with his entire family as emigrant Muslims to join the Prophet (PBBUH).

Seeing his uncle `Abbas arriving and joining him as a Muslim brought a great joy to the Prophet (PBBUH).

The Muslim Army Camps at Mar Al-Zahran

The Prophet (PBBUH) resumed the march with his troops of ten thousand men. Since it was Ramadan, they were all fasting. When they reached Al-Kadid, the Prophet (PBBUH) found that fasting was no longer bearable for the Muslims. So, he (PBBUH) broke his fast and told his Companions to do the same.

The Prophet (PBBUH) then advanced with his army and, upon arriving at Mar Al-Zahran, situated only twenty-two kilometers away from Makkah, he (PBBUH) ordered his army to stop and make camp.

Up until then, no one among the Quraysh had learned about the action taking place on the ground. The Prophet (PBBUH) decided that it was time to make it known to them. He (PBBUH) did not want to take the Makkans by surprise. Therefore, he (PBBUH) ordered that each man in his army should light an individual campfire. A total of ten thousand campfires were lit that night. The brightness of these fires, kindled throughout the camp, could be seen many kilometers away, announcing the Prophet's (PBBUH) arrival and indicating the size of his army. He (PBBUH) assigned `Umar ibn Al-Khattab the task of standing guard over the camp.

Al-`Abbas Warns the Quraysh and Abu Sufyan Reconnoitres the Area

Al-`Abbas ibn `Abdul-Muttalib was awestruck by the size and force of the army assembled by his nephew (PBBUH) for the Conquest of Makkah. He wanted to alert his people to the situation. He asked the permission of the

Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) to take his mule and search for someone who might inform the Quraysh that the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) was outside the city, so that they might come out to him and ask him for a guarantee of safety before he (PBBUH) entered Makkah by force.

Even though Almighty Allah prevented any news of what was happening from reaching the Quraysh, they were still apprehensive and expecting a serious reaction. The Makkan leadership felt that a very imminent danger was approaching in consequence of the wrongful assault made upon the Khuz`ah and the breach of the peace treaty that this assault caused. They sent Abu Sufyan ibn Harb, Budayl ibn Warqa', and Hakim ibn Hizam to reconnoiter the position of the Muslims. They needed to gather information and assess the level of danger, which they felt to be near.

At the time, Al-`Abbas was riding around in the area on the Prophet's (PBBUH) white mule. He overheard this conversation between Abu Sufyan and Budayl ibn Warqa'. They were both awestruck by the spectacle of the thousands of blazing campfires.

Abu Sufyan said, "I have never seen fires or an encampment like those which I see tonight."

Budayl ibn Warqa' replied, "By Allah, this must be the Khuz`ah inflamed by war (passion)."

Abu Sufyan disagreed with him, saying, "The Khuz`ah are too inferior and too small to have such fires and such a camp."

Al-`Abbas Meets Abu Sufyan and Grants Him Protection

Al-`Abbas instantly recognized the voice of the Makkan chieftain, Abu Sufyan, and called out to him by his nickname, "O Abu Hanzalah!" He responded to him also by his nickname, "O Abul-Fadl!" and the following conversation took place between them:

Al-`Abbas said, "Woe to you, Abu Sufyan! The Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) is here with his army. What a morning is awaiting the Quraysh if he (PBBUH) should enter by force into Makkah."

Abu Sufyan asked, "What is the way out? May my father and mother be sacrificed for you?"

Al-`Abbas replied, "By Allah, if the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) seizes you, he will strike your neck. Mount on the back of this mule. I will take you to the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) and ask him to grant you security."

Abu Sufyan sent back his two companions, Budayl and Hakim, to Makkah and rode behind Al-`Abbas to the Muslim camp. Every time the two riders passed by one of the Muslim campfires, the men there looked at him and asked, "Who is this?" But when they saw and recognized the Prophet's (PBBUH) mule, with Al-`Abbas riding on it, they would say, "This is the paternal uncle of the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) riding upon his mule," and they would let him pass.

Finally, they passed by the fire of `Umar ibn Al-Khattab, who was standing on guard. `Umar asked, "Who is this?" He then approached the two riders, but when he caught sight of Abu Sufyan riding behind Al-`Abbas, he exclaimed, "Abu Sufyan, the enemy of Allah! All praise be to Allah Who has enabled us to seize you without a pact or covenant (that guarantees your safety)."

Al-`Abbas understood what `Umar intended by what he said, and he rode quickly to the tent of the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH). He took Abu Sufyan inside, into the presence of the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH). `Umar soon followed and entered the tent. He said, "O Messenger of Allah! Here is Abu Sufyan. Allow me to strike his neck." Al-`Abbas promptly interjected, "Take it easy, O `Umar. For I have granted him protection. By Allah, if he had been one of the men of Banu `Adi (the clan to which `Umar belonged), you would not have said this."

To this, `Umar replied, “Take it easy, O `Abbas! By Allah, your embracing Islam was more beloved to me than that of (my father) Al-Khattab would have been, had he embraced Islam. And that is only because I know that your embracing Islam was more beloved to the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) than that of Al-Khattab would have been, had he embraced Islam (which he never did).”

The Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) stepped in to calm them both down and deferred deciding upon the matter until the next morning. He (PBBUH) said, “**O `Abbas, take him to your camping place, and bring him to me when you wake up in the morning.**”

Abu Sufyan in the Presence of the Messenger of Allah

When the morning arrived, Al-`Abbas brought Abu Sufyan to the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH), and the following conversation took place between them within earshot of some major Companions:

The Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) said, “*Wayhaka* (an expression of compassion and pity), **O Abu Sufyan, is it not time for you to accept that there is no god but Allah?**”

Abu Sufyan replied, “May my father and mother be sacrificed for you. How forbearing, and generous, and dutiful to kinship bonds you are! By Allah, I think that if there had been another god besides Allah, he would have helped me somewhat.”

The Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) said, “*Wayhaka*, **O Abu Sufyan, is it not time for you to accept that I am the Messenger of Allah?**”

Abu Sufyan replied, “May my father and mother be sacrificed for you. How forbearing, and generous, and dutiful to kinship bonds you are! As for this issue, I still have some doubts about it.”

Al-`Abbas intervened and said to Abu Sufyan, “Woe to you! Embrace Islam and testify that there is no god but Allah and that Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah before your neck is struck.”

After Abu Sufyan pronounced the testimony of faith, Al-`Abbas made this request to the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH), “O Messenger of Allah, Abu Sufyan is a man who loves glory. Grant him something of the sort (that shall be a cause of glory for him among his clansmen).”

The Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) said, “**Yes. Anyone who enters the house of Abu Sufyan shall be safe. Anyone who locks his door shall be safe. And anyone who enters the Sacred Mosque shall be safe.**”

The Prophet (PBBUH) Takes Precautionary Measures before Entering Makkah

The march for opening Makkah was a key, if not the most important, event in the history of the Islamic call. It stood out as a pivotal journey along its path, the same as the Hijrah. Even though the Prophet (PBBUH) was supported by Divine Revelation, he (PBBUH) did not leave details to chance, as evident in all his previous undertakings such as the Hijrah, the Battles of Badr, Uhud, and Al-Khandaq, and Al-Hudaiyah Treaty.

Now, the Prophet (PBBUH) was on the outskirts of Makkah, close to the great victory. Therefore, He (PBBUH) took all measures of caution and accurate accomplishment in order to avoid the risk of failure or loss of this long-awaited moment.

Neither the entry of Abu Sufyan into Islam nor a large army were sufficient factors for victory. Victory is entirely in Allah’s Hands. He bestows it as He pleases, on those who prepare themselves perfectly for it and take care of all aspects that may stand as an impediment hindering the achievement of their objective.

It was a core aim of the Prophet (PBBUH) to enter Makkah without shedding blood, and he (PBBUH) adopted the following procedures to achieve this end:

1. He (PBBUH) commanded his uncle Al-`Abbas to detain Abu Sufyan in the narrow section of the valley overlooking the entryway of the mountain. From that position, Abu Sufyan would have a clear view of Allah's troops when they passed by on their way to Makkah. He could then provide his own eyewitness account of the Muslim army to his people and advise them to give up any plans of resistance.
2. He (PBBUH) divided his army into four battalions that would enter Makkah at the same time from all its four sides to break up attempts by the Quraysh to take action, thus leaving no room for resistance and preventing bloodshed. He (PBBUH) gave strict orders to all divisions that they must not initiate any fighting or shed any blood unless compelled to do so by the overwhelming necessity of the situation. The whole army was soon in motion in the following division and order:
 - a. The main battalion: Headed by the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) himself. He (PBBUH) assigned the task of carrying the banner to Abu `Ubaidah ibn Al-Jarrah. This battalion would enter Makkah from its northwest, main road.
 - b. The second battalion: Headed by Khalid ibn Al-Walid. It would enter Makkah from the northeast.
 - c. The third battalion: Headed by `Ali ibn Abu Talib. It would enter Makkah from the southeast.
 - d. The fourth battalion: Headed by Al-Zubair ibn Al-`Awwam. It would enter Makkah from the southwest.

Abu Sufyan Witnesses the Strength and Organization of the Muslim Forces

The different tribes forming Allah's Army marched forth with their banners raised and passed by Abu Sufyan, who was standing watching with Al-'Abbas at the entrance to the mountain, in the position which the Prophet (PBBUH) had selected.

Tribe after tribe marched by; every time a tribe passed in front of Abu Sufyan, he would ask, "O Al-'Abbas, who are these?" After telling him the name of their tribe, he would say, "What have I to do with so-and-so?"

Finally, the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) passed by with his green battalion, composed of Al-Muhajirun (the Emigrants) and Al-Ansar (the Supporters), who were completely clad in armor with only their eyes visible. Abu Sufyan, greatly amazed, said, "Glorified be Allah, O Al-'Abbas, who are these?" Al-'Abbas replied, "This is the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) among Al-Muhajirun and Al-Ansar." Abu Sufyan said in awe, "No one has the might to overcome these men. By Allah, O Abul-Fadl (i.e., Al-'Abbas), the kingdom of your nephew has this day become great indeed." Al-'Abbas responded, "O Abu Sufyan, it is prophethood (not a kingdom)." Abu Sufyan agreed, saying, "Yes, it is so."

Today is the Day of Mercy

Sa'd ibn 'Ubadah was the banner carrier for the battalion of Al-Ansar, and as he was passing close by to where Abu Sufyan stood, he said "Today is a day of slaughter! Today Allah shall disgrace the Quraysh." Abu Sufyan complained about this statement to the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) when he drew near him with his battalion. He said, "O Messenger of Allah, have you given orders to kill your people?" The Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) replied, "**No.**" Abu Sufyan then repeated to him what Sa'd ibn Ubadah had said to him, and the response of the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) was, "**Sa'd told a lie. Today is a day of mercy. Today Allah shall honor the Quraysh.**"

One action then solved the two problems. The Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) ordered that the banner be taken away from Sa`d, thus dismissing him from his position as the leader of the battalion. He (PBBUH) then handed over leadership to his son, Qais. This meant that the honor of carrying the banner did not really leave Sa`d, because it went to his own son.

Abu Sufyan Warns the Quraysh

After the Prophet (PBBUH) had passed by, Al-`Abbas told Abu Sufyan to rush back to Makkah and warn his people. Abu Sufyan quickly went back to warn his tribe, which was what the Prophet (PBBUH) had planned in order to make a peaceful opening of Makkah.

Once Abu Sufyan reached Makkah, he began shouting at the top of his voice, “O people of the Quraysh, this is Muhammad! He has come to you with a force that you cannot resist. Anyone who enters the house of Abu Sufyan shall be safe.” The people exclaimed, “May Allah curse you! And what will your house avail us (i.e., it cannot accommodate us all)?” Abu Sufyan went on and said, “And anyone who locks his door shall be safe. And anyone who enters the Mosque shall be safe.”

The crowd of people were relieved with this announcement and dispersed, some to their homes and some to the Mosque.

Attaining the Manifest Victory

The Muslim troops, organized by the Prophet (PBBUH) into four battalions, advanced together in ordered lines, with the Prophet (PBBUH) in the lead. They entered Makkah from all its four sides at the same time – that was the Opening of Makkah, on Friday, the 20th of Ramadan 8 A.H., ten days after their departure from Madinah.

The process was peaceful; it progressed as planned and desired by the Prophet (PBBUH). All the people of Makkah followed the advice of Abu Sufyan and stayed in their houses or in the sanctuary. The four battalions marched into the city without any significant resistance. No bloodshed occurred except at the northeast section of the city, which was assigned to Khalid ibn Al-Walid and his battalion.

That section of Makkah was inhabited by the members of the Quraysh most hostile to the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH), including those who had violated Al-Hudaibiyah Treaty by taking part in the attack against Khuza`ah tribe. They were displeased by what Abu Sufyan announced, and they decided to put up a fight, led by such men as `Ikrimah ibn Abu Jahl and Safwan ibn Umayyah. They assembled a battle group that showered the battalion of Khalid ibn Al-Walid upon their entering their district.

In response, Khalid ordered his men to attack them. It was only a short time before they put this resisting group to a hasty flight after killing twelve of them. Two Muslim men, who became separated from the battalion during the attack, were killed. The two leaders, `Ikrimah and Safwan, abandoned their men and fled the area as soon as they realized the futility of resistance.

The Prophet (PBBUH) advanced inside the city, and the four battalions joined up with one another and surrounded him in the center of Makkah. He (PBBUH) entered riding his camel while reciting the Chapter of Al-Fath (The Victory), “*Verily, We (Allah) have given you (O Muhammad) a manifest victory,*” with his head bowed low in humbleness and gratitude to Almighty Allah, so low that his beard almost touched the back of his mount.

This was the manifest victory which Almighty Allah promised to grant to His Messenger (PBBUH). Makkah was opened. People began entering Islam in throngs, when they had previously been entering one by one.

The Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) Inside Makkah

Following his emigration, the Prophet (PBBUH) was dispossessed of his own house in Makkah. It was reported that when Usamah ibn Zaid asked him, “O Messenger of Allah, will you stay in your house in Makkah?” he (PBBUH) replied, **“Has `Aqil¹ left us any house?”** And so, a tent was pitched for him (PBBUH) on a hill called Al-Hajun in upper Makkah, which overlooked the Sacred Mosque and was the site of the city’s main cemetery.

From that hill, the Prophet (PBBUH) let his gaze travel around the valley and the mountains surrounding it, feeling deep gratitude to Allah (Exalted be He), Who had brought him back to his land victorious, after being driven out of it persecuted and forced to emigrate against his will.

These were the same mountains to which he (PBBUH) fled for refuge when the oppression practiced by the Quraysh against him intensified. Among these familiar mountains was Hira’, the natural sanctum where he (PBBUH) used to worship Allah and contemplate His Works until the divine revelation descended upon him. He (PBBUH) sent his eyes over the mountains, the valley, and the dwellings scattered around. At the center of this scenery stood the Ka`bah, Allah’s Sacred House.

Now the sanctuary of the Sacred House was open for the Muslims in complete peace and security. Therefore, deep gratitude and longing was the prevailing, all-encompassing emotion among them. The Prophet (PBBUH) felt that his duty as an army leader had ended. He (PBBUH) left his tent, mounted his camel Al-Qaswa’, and made his way to the Ka`bah in the company of the Muslims.

¹ Aqil and Talib, who had not embraced Islam, became the heirs of Abu Talib’s property to the exclusion of the other Muslim heirs.

The Prophet (PBBUH) circled the Ka`bah seven times on his camel, touching the Black Stone¹ on every circuit with a stick he (PBBUH) had in his hand. Around the Ka`bah there were three hundred and sixty idols, which the Prophet (PBBUH) started breaking with his stick, all the while reciting the Qur`anic verse: **“The Truth has come, and falsehood has vanished. Surely! Falsehood is ever bound to vanish.”** (Al-Isra’ 17:81)

After finishing the circumambulation of the Ka`bah, the Prophet (PBBUH) called for `Uthman ibn Talhah, the keeper of the key to the Ka`bah. He (PBBUH) took the key from him and ordered that the Ka`bah gate be opened. He (PBBUH) entered and broke all the statues inside. On the walls, there were inscribed pictures of angels and of Prophet Ibrahim (Abraham PBBUH) with his son Isma`il (Ishmael PBBUH), both holding divining arrows in their hands (*Azlam* in Arabic), used for seeking decisions. On seeing them, the Prophet (PBBUH) said, **“May Allah fight them (the idolaters)! They know that they (Ibrahim and Isma`il) never used the *Azlam* to make decisions.”** He (PBBUH) gave the command, and they were all destroyed.

In this way, the Ka`bah was purified of idols and idolatry, and every vestige of paganism was destroyed. By destroying them, the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) completed the message he (PBBUH) had been preaching for twenty years.

The Free and Universal Pardon

The Prophet (PBBUH) waited outside the Ka`bah until all the pictures and statues had been entirely destroyed. He (PBBUH) then entered and went around every corner of the Ka`bah proclaiming Allah’s Greatness and Oneness. He (PBBUH) then opened the door and exited the Ka`bah. By that time, the

¹ The Black Stone is a stone from Paradise that was set into one corner of the *Ka`bah* by Prophet Ibrahim (PBUH), who Muslims honor for that. Muslims follow the example of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), who kissed it during his Farewell Hajj. Muslims neither attach divine power to nor worship the Black Stone.

courtyard around the Ka`bah was crowded with lines of Quraysh waiting to see what the Prophet (PBBUH) intended to do next.

The Prophet (PBBUH) stood holding the door of the Ka`bah by its frame and addressed the multitude standing below in the Ka`bah courtyard. He (PBBUH) first recited to them Allah's Saying: "O humankind! We (Allah) have created you from a male and a female, and made you into nations and tribes, that you may know one another. Verily, the most noble of you in the Sight of Allah is the most righteous of you. Verily, Allah is All-Knowing, All-Aware." (Al-Hujurat 49:13)

The Prophet (PBBUH) then said, "O people of the Quraysh, what do you expect I will do with you?" They replied, "Good. You are a noble brother, and the son of a noble brother." He (PBBUH) said, "I say to you what Yusuf (Joseph PBBUH) said to his brothers: 'No reproach shall be on you this day.' (Yusuf 12:92) Go, for you are free ones."

The most beautiful pardon is that granted from a position of strength, not weakness. When Allah the Almighty gave His Prophet (PBBUH) the upper hand over his enemies, his first act was to bestow a universal pardon on the Quraysh and all the people of Makkah (except for around twelve arch criminals). He (PBBUH) forgave the past with all its injuries, affronts, and persecution, and treated his opponents with the manners of a Prophet of Allah, ensuring the freedom and security of all individuals.

Prophet Muhammad (PBBUH) set a peerless example of benevolence and loyalty, ascending to heights of nobility and loftiness of spirit unprecedented throughout history.

Handing back the Key of the Ka`bah to Its Keeper

The Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) was sitting in the mosque with the key of the Ka`bah still in his hand, when `Ali ibn Abu Talib got up and made a request.

“O Messenger of Allah, grant us (our clan) *Hijabah* (custodianship of the Ka`bah) and *Siqayah* (provision of fresh water for the pilgrims).” But the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) asked, “**Where is `Uthman ibn Talhah?**”

`Uthman was summoned and the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) said to him, “**Here is your key, O `Uthman. Today is a day of piety and fulfilment of rights.**” And he (PBBUH) recited Allah the Exalted’s Saying: “**Verily! Allah commands that you should render back the trusts to those to whom they are due.**” (Al-Nisa` 4:58)

Grievous Offenders Receiving Pardon

The amnesty accorded by the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) also later encompassed most of the twelve individuals whom he (PBBUH) had ordered should be excluded from pardon and executed. Their punishment was indeed earned – and deserved – because of their grievous crimes. It was not inflicted out of malice or anger, because the Prophet’s (PBBUH) heart was pure of all blemish. Rather, their own bad actions clearly marked them as what is presently termed “war criminals.”

Prominent among these criminals who were spared execution and pardoned were the following:

1. `Ikrimah ibn Abu Jahl:

`Ikrimah disappeared after his retreat from the fight against Khalid ibn Al-Walid. He then escaped to Yemen with the intention of sailing to Abyssinia (Ethiopia). His wife, Umm Hakim, had embraced Islam on the Day of the Conquest and sought pardon for her husband directly from the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH). Having secured his pardon, she travelled to Yemen and caught up with `Ikrimah before he embarked on a ship sailing to Abyssinia. She gave her husband the glad tidings of pardon, saying to him, “I have come to you from the kindest towards his kin, and the best of all people. Do not ruin yourself (by

fleeing), for I have asked him (PBBUH) for a grant of protection for you.”
`Ikrimah accepted and went back with her.

Upon seeing `Ikrimah coming, the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) jumped up to his feet with joy and received him with the words, **“Welcome to the one who has come to us as an emigrant Muslim.”** After `Ikrimah pronounced his faith in Islam, he asked the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) to forgive him every act of enmity he had committed against him. The Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) asked Allah to forgive him for all past enmity he had done or participated in towards him, and, from that time, `Ikrimah became one of the best Muslims.

2. Safwan ibn Umayyah

Safwan fled to Jeddah after the Conquest of Makkah. One of his relatives, named `Umair ibn Wahb, requested a grant of protection for him from the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH), and he (PBBUH) gave him protection. He (PBBUH) also handed `Umair his own turban, which he (PBBUH) had worn on the Day of Opening Makkah, as a token of this promise of security.

`Umair caught up with Safwan in Jeddah before the sailing of his ship. He persuaded him to come back with him, giving him the turban belonging to the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) as evidence of the promise made regarding him. Safwan agreed to return with `Umair. When he came to the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH), he asked for two months in which to deliberate his decision. The Prophet (PBBUH) gave him four months. But long before this period was over, Safwan had a change of heart and became a good Muslim.

3. Hind bint `Utbah

Hind was the one who chewed the liver of Hamzah, the Prophet’s (PBBUH) uncle, after his martyrdom at the Battle of Uhud. She harbored strong hostility towards the Prophet (PBBUH), but her hostility was subdued and discarded with the arising circumstances.

The great honor and conquest which Allah bestowed upon His Messenger (PBBUH) led the people of Makkah to realize with certainty that success lay with Islam. So, they accepted the new reality and gathered to swear allegiance to the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH).

The Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) was sitting on Al-Safa Mount receiving the pledge of allegiance from the people: to heed and obey Allah and His Messenger to the extent of their ability.

After the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) had taken the pledges from men, he (PBBUH) began taking them from women. Hind bint `Utbah was among the women assembled. She was concealing her identity because of her past transgressions. When the Prophet (PBBUH) addressed the women, saying, **“I take your pledge of allegiance that you will not associate anything with Allah,”** and came to the part of the pledge in which he (PBBUH) required them to **“not steal,”** Hind interposed, saying, “Abu Sufyan is a miserly man. I used to take some triflings from his money. I do not know whether this was lawful for me or not.”

Abu Sufyan, who was sitting with the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) witnessing the pledge of allegiance, said, “As for what you took in the past, it was lawful for you.” The Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) laughed and recognized who she was. He (PBBUH) said, **“You are Hind?”** She replied, “Yes, so forgive me for what is past, O Prophet of Allah, may Allah forgive you.” The Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) accepted her request and forgave her, and she embraced Islam.

4. Fudalah ibn `Umair

After the Conquest of Makkah, the Prophet (PBBUH) was circumambulating the House when Fudalah ibn `Umair decided to kill him. He told no one about his intention. When he drew near, resolved to execute his plan, the Prophet (PBBUH) asked, **“Fudalah?”** He replied, “Yes! Fudalah, O Messenger of Allah!” He (PBBUH) asked, **“What were you saying to yourself?”** He said, “Nothing. I was invoking Allah!” The Prophet (PBBUH) laughed and said, **“Ask**

Allah for forgiveness.” He (PBBUH) then placed his hand on Fudalah’s chest and peace came to his heart.

After this incident, Fudalah used to say, “By Allah, by the time he (PBBUH) took his hand off my chest, none of Allah’s creation was dearer to me than him.”

The history of the Prophet (PBBUH) abounds with further examples of his gracious acts of forgiveness and clemency towards everyone that are beyond the scope of this book.

The Prophet’s (PBBUH) First Actions in Makkah

The Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) remained in Makkah for nineteen days, leading, guiding, and instructing people to the straight path to which he (PBBUH) had been calling people since the beginning of his mission.

Following are the major events that took place during this period of his stay in Makkah:

Performing Azan and Salah

After the Ka`bah was purged of all idols and became rededicated to Allah and His worship alone, the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) commanded Bilal, a former slave and one of the earliest Muslims, to climb on top of the Ka`bah and announce the Azan (the summons or call to prayer). As ordered, Bilal ibn Rabah called the Azan from the top of the Ka`bah and then, led by the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH), the Muslims performed the prayer.

From that day onwards, Bilal and his successors undertook the task of calling for prayers five times each day, all year round, and this universal and continuous calling of the Azan shall continue until the Day of Judgment. Muslims responded, and shall continue to respond, to the summons to prayer and pray in the same manner that the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) prayed, with their hearts

turned towards Allah (Exalted be He) and their faces turned towards the Sacred House, which the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) purified from paganism and idolatry.

The Prophet (PBBUH) Preaches in Makkah

The Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) delivered several sermons in Makkah in which he illuminated realities and explained different laws and guiding principles.

The First Sermon

The Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) delivered his first sermon while standing at the door of the Ka`bah. In this historic sermon, he (PBBUH) granted a general pardon to all Makkans, saying to them: **“Go, for you are free ones.”**

The Second Sermon

On the morning of the Opening of Makkah, some disturbing news reached the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH): his allies from the Khuza`ah tribe had attacked and killed a polytheist man from the Hudhail tribe, in what turned out to be a revenge killing.

On hearing this, the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) became angry, and stood up to deliver a speech. He (PBBUH) said, **“O people, Allah made Makkah a sanctuary (sacred place) the day He created the heavens and the earth; so it is sacred by the sacredness conferred on it by Allah until the Day of Resurrection. It is not lawful for anyone who believes in Allah and the last Day to shed blood therein nor to cut down trees therein. This was not lawful for anyone before me nor shall it be lawful for anyone after me. It was made lawful for me only during this hour, because of (Allah’s) Anger against its**

inhabitants; and it once again returned as sacred as it was yesterday. So, let those who are present inform those who are absent.”

The Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) then addressed the speech directly to Banu Khuza`ah, saying to them, **“O people of the Khuza`ah, raise (stop) your hands from killing... You killed a man whose *Diyah* (blood money) I shall pay. If a person (of anyone’s family) is killed after this standing of mine before you, his family has the right to choose the best of two options: either (to demand) the blood of the killer or (to accept) his *Diyah*.”**

In this way, the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) continued to lay down the laws and principles that regulate and guide human conduct and put people on the right path that pleases Allah and His Messenger (PBBUH).

Receiving the Pledge of Allegiance

Along with the exercise of forbearance and the general pardon granted by the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) to the Makkans, was the attitude and approach which he (PBBUH) adopted and won over to him the hearts of the people.

Once all the Makkans were pardoned, they became willing to do what they had previously been unable or unwilling to do: embracing Islam. They flocked to the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) to swear their allegiance and become Muslims.

Abu Quhafah, the Father of Abu Bakr, Accepts Islam

Abu Bakr came leading his aged father, who was a blind man, until they came and stood before the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH). Upon seeing them, the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) said, **“Why did you not leave the old man at his house so that I could have been the one to go to him there?”** Abu Bakr replied, **“O Messenger of Allah, it is more fitting that he should walk to you, than you to him.”** The Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) seated Abu Quhafah before him, passed

his hand over his chest, and said, “**Embrace Islam.**” Abu Quhafah embraced Islam and became a good Muslim.

Dispatching Units to Destroy Idols in Arabia

After the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) was finished with the task of purifying the Ka`bah of all idols and images, he (PBBUH) started dispatching small units to locations around Makkah to invite their people to Islam and destroy any gods or statues worshipped in them.

Following is the news of some of these units:

A. The Unit Under the Command of Khalid ibn Al-Walid:

The Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) sent Khalid ibn Al-Walid at the head of thirty horsemen to destroy Al-`Uzzah, the biggest and most revered idol of the Quraysh and all the Arabs. Its statue was situated in the region of Nakhlah.

B. The Unit Under the Command of `Amr ibn Al-As:

The Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) sent `Amr ibn Al-`As to the Hudhail region to destroy the idol named Suwa`, which was the main idol worshipped by the people there. Its statue was situated three miles from Makkah. `Amr went to it and destroyed it.

C. The Unit Under the Command of Sa`d ibn Zaid Al-Ashhali:

The Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) sent Sa`d ibn Zaid Al-Ashhali at the head of twenty horsemen to destroy Manat, which was an idol worshipped by both the Hudhail and the Khuz`ah. It was also glorified by other Arabs, especially the two tribes of Al-Aws and Al-Khazraj before they embraced Islam.

Dispersing the Fears of Al-Ansar

When the Ansar saw the responsive interest of the people of Makkah towards the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH), and his reuniting with his homeland and birthplace after Allah opened it for him, they had fears that he (PBBUH) might leave Madinah and return to his original land. They said to one another, “Do you not think that since Allah has opened to His Messenger (PBBUH) his native land and country, he might prefer to stay in it?”

While the group of the Ansar were conversing thus, the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) was on Al-Safa Mount holding up his hands, supplicating his Lord. Once he (PBBUH) had completed his supplication, he asked them, **“What were you saying?”** They replied, “Nothing, O Messenger of Allah.” But the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) insisted until they disclosed to him their fears, and his response was, **“I seek refuge in Allah (or Allah forbid)! I shall live among you and die among you.”**

As befits a Prophet, he (PBBUH) offered in his person an example of genuine commitment to the Pledge of Al-`Aqabah and demonstrated loyalty towards his supporters who stood by his side at times of adversity. His commitment and loyalty were strong and spontaneous, which neither love of country nor kindred could induce him to forget or forgo.

The Outcomes of the Conquest of Makkah

The Conquest of Makkah established itself as the decisive battle and the great victory that eradicated paganism once and for all from the regions of the Arabian Peninsula. It was a battle that opened up the eyes and removed all obstructions between people and Islam. Through this achievement, the Muslims controlled both the political and religious arenas throughout the entire length and width of the Arabian Peninsula. As such, it deserved to be recognized as a Manifest Victory.

The Battle of Hunain

After opening Makkah, the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) stayed there, along with the Muslim, for eighteen or nineteen days. For them, it was a time of rejoicing in what Allah (the Most High) had bestowed on them. The entire Quraysh and all neighboring tribes had finally resigned themselves to the true religion, with the exception of two tribes: Hawazin and Thaqif. These two formed the second strongest force in the Arabian Peninsula after the Quraysh. They lived in a state of constant rivalry with the Quraysh over the leadership of the Arabs. Thaqif even worshipped their own idol, for which they erected a temple to compete with the Ka`bah.

Therefore, when these two major, fierce, and arrogant tribes heard the news of the submission of the Quraysh and their alignment with the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) and the demolition of their idols, they entertained fears that the circle would come to a full turn, and soon they would end up in the same position as the Quraysh.

Uniting and Allying Together against the Muslims

Faced with the situation on the ground at Makkah, Hawazin and Thaqif started working together to withstand the growing power of the Muslims. Their leaders said, "Muhammad has finished fighting his own people, and there is nothing to prevent him from (turning to) us. Let us attack him before he attacks us." Very soon the matter was agreed upon, and preparations for the fighting began. The choice of the two tribes for the leader of their allied army rested on the Hawazin chieftain, Malik ibn Awf Al-Nasri. He was a man known for his valiance and bravery, despite his young age of thirty.

Hawazin and Thaqif were joined in their war by large masses from the tribes of Nasr, Jashm, Banu Sa'd bin Bakr (from among whom the Prophet PBBUH was nursed when he was a suckling child), and some people of Banu Hilal.

The allied troops began marching to Awtas, which was a valley near Hunain; there they encamped. They had taken with them their wives, children, belongings, and livestock. Malik ibn Awf Al-Nasri formulated this plan to compel his men to fight to the end without thinking of retreat. As they were preparing to set out, he had ordered his men to bring with them their families and wealth.

Veteran Experience in Warfare Exposes Faulty Decision-Making

Among the army gathered at Awtas was a war-experienced older man named Duraid ibn Al-Sammah. He had grown very old and nothing of use remained in him except his valuable veteran advice that stemmed from his vast personal experience in wars.

On hearing the commotion coming from the rear of the army – the groaning of camels, braying of donkeys, bleating of sheep, mixed with the cries of children – Duraid asked, “Why did the warriors bring along with them their wealth, wives, and children?” Malik replied, “I wanted to place behind every man his own family and wealth so that he fights to defend them.” Duraid, strongly disapproving of this strategy, exclaimed, “By Allah, you are nothing but a sheep tender! Can anything hold back a defeated man (from running away)? If the battle goes in your favor, nothing will help you (to realize victory) except a man with his sword and spear (and not women and children at the rear of the army). And if the battle goes against you, you will be disgraced in front of your people and property.”

Duraid advised Malik, saying, “Send them back to the impregnable regions of their homeland.” Malik rebuffed the counsel of the veteran, saying to him, “By Allah, I will not do that! Indeed, you have grown senile, and your mind has grown old.”

People followed the decision of Malik, and Duraid, despite his wiser judgement, gave in to the majority and went along with them.

The Troops Led by Malik Entrench themselves in the Narrow Part of Hunain Valley

Malik directed his men to move themselves to the hills of Hunain and hide in the narrow part of the valley. He ordered them to wait in ambush there for the arrival of the Muslims and to shower arrows down upon them as they walked through the valley.

All enemy tribes complied with the orders of Malik and proceeded from Awtas to Hunain to fortify themselves in the straits of the valley.

The Prophet (PBBUH) Sends a Scout to Investigate the Enemy's Intentions

When the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) was informed of the march of Hawazin and Thaqif against him due to the Conquest of Makkah, he dispatched Abu Hadrud Al-Aslami to go and infiltrate them and stay until he could gather information about their plans. Abu Hadrud Al-Aslami did as the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) ordered and brought back news of all that he had seen and learned.

The Muslims March from Makkah to Hunain

On the sixth of Shawwal of the 8th year of Hijrah, nineteen days after the entry of the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) into Makkah, he (PBBUH) departed for Hunain at the head of twelve thousand Muslims; ten thousand of them were the men who had come out with him from Madinah for the opening of Makkah, and the other two thousand were Makkans who had recently embraced Islam. Among them were such personalities as Abu Sufyan ibn Harb. They went forth under the leadership of Messenger Muhammad (PBBUH) with power and numbers unprecedented in the history of the lands of the Arabs.

Before leaving, the Prophet (PBBUH) entrusted the administration of Makkah to `Itab ibn Usaid.

Coming Across the Tree called Dhat Anwat

On their way to Hunain, the Muslims saw a great lote tree, called *Dhat Al-Anwat* (literally, a tree on which objects are hung), belonging to the pagan Arabs. They used to come to it every year to hang their weapons on its branches in pursuit of blessings from it for victory. They would offer sacrifices beneath it and stay near it for a full day. On seeing it, some members of the army, in particular the recent Muslims, said to the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH), “Make for us a Dhat Anwat just like they have a Dhat Anwat.” The Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) replied, “**Allahu Akbar (Allah is the Greatest)! By the One in Whose Hand is the soul of Muhammad, you have said just as the people of Moses (i.e., the Children of Israel) said to him, ‘Make for us a god as they have gods.’ He (Moses PBBUH) said, ‘Verily, you are a people who know not (the Majesty and Greatness of Allah).’**” (Al-`Araf 7:138)

The Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) then added, “**These are the practices (of previous different nations). You will indeed follow the practices of those who preceded you.**”

The Muslims Approach Hunain Valley

On approaching Hunain Valley, the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) sent out one of his horsemen to determine the numbers of the enemy from one of the mountains overlooking Hunain Valley. Upon returning, he told the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) that he saw Hawazin gathered all together with their families and possessions at Hunain. The Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) smiled and expressed his trust in Allah and His Help, saying, “**That will be the booty of the Muslims tomorrow, if Allah wills.**”

“We Shall Not Be Defeated Today Because of Smallness of Numbers”

The Muslims spent the night filled with sure prospects of mounting a sweeping attack on the enemy at dawn. Some of them even got so carried away with overconfidence and pride in their great numbers that they thought they were invincible.

While the Muslim army was going ahead to Hunain, and feeling impressed with their numbers and expecting certain victory, one of them said, “We shall not be defeated today because of smallness of numbers.” These words fell hard on the Prophet’s (PBBUH) ears, and the Muslims were later admonished in the Qur’an for boasting about their strength.

The Enemy Ambushes the Muslim Army in a Surprise Attack

At early dawn, the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) started assigning posts and distributing flags to the men of his army. In the dark of predawn, he (PBBUH) mobilized his army and marched towards Hunain to take the enemy by surprise and quickly overwhelm them. The Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) was riding on his white mule at the back of his army.

The Muslim army started to descend gradually into Hunain Valley, unaware of the presence of the enemy troops, who had arrived first on the ground and were hiding in wait for them in the narrow tracks and passes of the valley.

The Muslims had no idea about the trap they were walking in. As they were in the process of descending the valley during the dawn of early morning, a shower of arrows began to fall upon them, and the squadrons of the enemy fiercely attacked them as one man. The suddenness of the attack threw the ranks of the Muslim army into chaos and confusion, and many of the soldiers fled, none heeding the other.

The Glee Shown by Some Recent Makkan Muslims

When Abu Sufyan, who had recently embraced Islam, saw the defeat that was coming down on the Muslims, he said with a smile of jubilant satisfaction, “Their retreat will not stop until they reach the (Red) Sea.” Another man, Shaibah ibn `Uthman ibn Abu Talhah, whose father was killed at Uhud, joined in and showed his animosity. He cried out, “Today, I will take my revenge on Muhammad.” Likewise, Kaldah ibn Hanbal commented on the retreat of the Muslims, saying, “Today, the magic (of Islam) has been broken.” His uterine brother, Safwan, reproachfully interrupted him, saying, “Shut up. By Allah, I would prefer to be ruled by a man from the Quraysh than by a man from Hawazin.”

These remarks were being exchanged while the Muslim ranks were falling into confusion. The various tribes were retreating and fleeing from the enemy, none paying attention to the other. They ran away, one after the other passing by the Prophet (PBBUH), who held firm in his position at the rear of the army.

The Steadfastness of the Prophet (PBBUH) and His Unshakable Will

The Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) remained steadfast in his position, surrounded by a small group of Al-Muhajirun and Al-Ansar who stayed beside him. He (PBBUH) began calling out, **“O people! Come to me. I am the Messenger of Allah! I am Muhammad ibn Abdullah.”**

During that difficult situation when the Muslims were fleeing in chaos, and the enemy were chasing after them and stabbing those they could, the matchless bravery and courage of the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) appeared. On his white mule, he (PBBUH) rushed into the face of the torrent of the numerous enemy’s men, while repeating, **“I am the Prophet, it is no lie. I am the son of `Abdul-Muttalib.”** However, Abu Sufyan ibn Al-Harith ibn `Abdul-Muttalib held back the reins of his white mule to prevent it from advancing swiftly toward the enemy any further.

The Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) then dismounted his mule and supplicated for Allah's Support, saying, **"O Allah, send Your victory."**

The Crying Out of Al-`Abbas to Regroup and the Return of the Muslim Army

The Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) commanded his uncle Al-`Abbas, who was endowed with a powerful voice, to call out to his Companions to come back. Al-`Abbas did as he was commanded and called out as loudly as he could, **"O supporters! O people of Al-Samurah** (which was the name of the tree under which the Muslims had gathered to give Al-Ridwan Pledge)." Al-`Abbas kept calling the army back until the whole valley reverberated with his voice.

Upon hearing the cries of Al-`Abbas, the Companions responded instantly, "Here we are at your service! Here we are at your service!" Then the various divisions of the Muslim army started to successively return to the battlefield, and they gathered themselves around the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH), courageously eager and ready for the fight.

The Tide of the Battle Turns in Favor of the Muslims

Tranquility descended upon the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) and the believers. The Muslims returned and their numbers kept increasing. By that time, the darkness of dawn had passed, the morning light shined, and the entire force of Hawazin and Thaqif came out of hiding and confronted the Muslims face to face in the valley.

Standing close, the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) looked at the battlefield as the fighting grew intense, and said, **"Now the fighting has become fierce!"** He (PBBUH) then took a handful of earth and tossed it in the faces of the enemy, while saying, **"By the Lord of Muhammad, be defeated."**

Because of this handful of earth, there was not one among them whose eyes were not filled with dust. From that moment on, the course of the battle changed. The enemy troops became confused and from here their disorder and retreat commenced.

The Muslims then advanced to the battle with power and engaged with the enemy, wholeheartedly welcoming death for Allah's Sake. It was only a matter of a few hours before the enemy suffered an overwhelming defeat. Hawazin, Thaqif, and their allies realized that continuing meant they would expose themselves to annihilation, and they started to flee, caring about no one and abandoning everything: their families, children, and belongings.

The Muslims continued the pursuit of the enemy, who were now in full retreat and dire confusion. Their ranks broke and they scattered, some to Al-Ta'if, some to Nakhlah, and others to Awtas. Of the three groups, the largest was the one that fled to Al-Ta'if.

The Booty Gained from Hunain

The Muslims seized six thousand captives and collected a large booty of wealth and cattle, amounting to twenty-four thousand camels, over forty thousand sheep, and four thousand ounces of silver. The Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) gave orders that all collected booty should be kept at Al-Ji'ranah, where it was held until he (PBBUH) returned from the pursuit of fleeing enemy fighters, who entrenched themselves in the City of Al-Ta'if.

Complete Defeat of the Pagan Opponents of the Prophet (PBBUH)

This was how Almighty Allah supported the believers with victory, and inflicted an utter defeat on the *Mushrikin*, after the fright and panic the Muslims first suffered during the darkness of dawn, when they found themselves caught in a surprise ambush by the enemy. Then Allah granted them a mighty victory

through the steadfastness exhibited by the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) and the few who remained firmly with him.

Concerning this event, Allah revealed the following description of the battle and the huge shifting of its course from defeat to victory, including an admonition to those who boasted about their large numbers, in His Saying:

“Truly, Allah has given you victory on many battlefields, and on the Day of Hunain (Battle) when you rejoiced at your great number but it availed you naught and the earth, vast as it is, was straitened for you, then you turned back in flight. Then Allah sent down His tranquility upon His Messenger (Muhammad), and upon the believers, and sent down forces (angels) which you saw not, and punished the disbelievers. Such is the recompense of disbelievers.” (Al-Tawbah 9:26)

The Battle of Al-Ta`if

The Battle of Al-Ta`if was an extension of the Battle of Hunain, because most of the defeated troops of the Hawazin and Thaqif gathered at Al-Ta`if, with their Commander Malik ibn `Awf, and fortified themselves therein.

So, upon achieving victory at Hunain, the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) ordered the march of his army towards Al-Ta`if.

The March to Al-Ta`if

The Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) and his Companions went directly from Hunain to Al-Ta`if to pursue fleeing enemy fighters. Khalid ibn Al-Walid was placed at the vanguard of the army.

The Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) marched on, passing through the valley of Nakhlah Al-Yamani, Qarn Al-Manazil, and Laiyah. At Laiyah was a fortress that belonged to Malik ibn `Awf, which he abandoned upon his escape to Al-Ta`if. The Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) ordered its demolition.

The Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) advanced with his troops until he reached Al-Ta`if. There he dismounted and pitched his camp near its impregnable fortress.

The Siege of Al-Ta`if

Siege was laid to the fortress of Al-Ta`if, whose inhabitants secured themselves within its walls with enough provisions for a year. The siege persisted for seventeen nights (according to other historians, it persisted for twenty nights). During this period, the defenders of the fortress put up a ferocious resistance. When they first saw the Muslims, they unleashed a torrent of arrows at them, aided in their attack by the elevated position of the fortress. As a result, twelve Muslims were killed and many were injured, including `Abdullah, the son of Abu Bakr.

Seeing the casualties that resulted, the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) made the immediate decision to move the Muslim camp and forces beyond the shooting range of Hawazin and Thaqif, who were raining down a volley of arrows upon them. Complying with his orders, the Muslims shifted their camp to higher ground at a safe distance from the enemy – to a site that later became the Mosque of Al-Ta`if.¹

During the besiegement, Khalid ibn Al-Walid repeatedly challenged the men entrenched inside to duels, but they met his challenges with this response: “We have enough food reserves to keep us for years. If you were to stay until all our food ran out, we would all come out to you with our swords until the last of us dies.”

Attacking the Fortress of Al-Ta`if with a Catapult

The Prophet (PBBUH) ordered a catapult to be set up and it began shooting rocks at the fortress until eventually a crack formed in the fortress wall. A group of Muslim soldiers then managed to pass through it into the fortress, sheltered by a testudo (a wooden protective cover, with shields of thick hide). But the defenders of the fortress spotted them and dropped down pieces of hot iron on them. The testudo burst into flames, and the soldiers shielded by it had to come out to escape burning. Subsequently, they were exposed once again to the arrows of the enemy; some of them were killed.

Like a Fox Hiding in Its Den

Repeated attempts to subdue the fortress failed. The siege became prolonged, and the fortress continued to be impregnable and well supplied with provisions to carry on resistance for a year. The Muslims were getting injured by arrow shots and missiles of heated iron pieces. A decision had to be made about whether they

¹ The Mosque of Al-Ta`if was built by the Thaqif after they embraced Islam, on the same spot in which the Prophet (PBUH) prayed during the besiegement.

should continue the siege or end it and depart. The Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) consulted Nawfal ibn Mu`awiyah Al-Daili, who replied with the following practical advice: “O Messenger of Allah, they are like a fox (hiding) in its den. If you stand in wait for it (persist in your siege), you will capture it. And if you leave it alone, it will not harm you.”

“O Allah, Guide the Thaqif and Bring Them (to Me) as Muslims”

At this point, the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) resolved to end the siege. He (PBBUH) ordered `Umar ibn Al-Khattab to inform the people that they should get ready to depart the next day. Once they were mounted and had started leaving Al-Ta`if, the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) told them, **“Say: We are returning, repenting, worshipping, and offering praise to our Lord.”**

A man then asked the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) to supplicate against the Thaqif (the tribe of Al-Ta`if). But the response of the man (PBBUH) sent as a mercy to humankind was to make a supplication for their guidance, saying, **“O Allah, guide the Thaqif and bring them (to me) as Muslims.”** Allah (the Exalted and Glorious) answered the supplication of the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) and guided the Thaqif to Islam. The following year, they embraced Islam willingly and came as Muslims to the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH).

Releasing and Returning the Captives of Hawazin

On the way home, after leaving Al-Ta`if, the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) and the Muslims halted at Al-Ji`ranah, where they had kept their captives and booty. Before starting to distribute the booty, he (PBBUH) waited for over ten nights at Al-Ji`ranah, in the hope that the Hawazin might come and express their repentance and reclaim their families and possessions. When none of them showed up, he (PBBUH) started dividing the gained possessions. He (PBBUH) took out the one-fifth share (*Al-Khumus*) and distributed the rest among his Companions.

After the distribution of the booty, and while still at Al-Ji`ranah, a delegation from the Hawazin came to the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) and announced their entry into Islam. They hoped that the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) would restore to them their families and wealth, and made a request for their return, saying, “O Messenger of Allah, we are (your) people and kindred, and the calamity that has befallen us is not hidden from you. Please show us favor, since Allah has granted you favor.”

Their entreaty was made more ardent by a man from the Hawazin, from the clan of Banu Sa`d ibn Bakr (this was the clan that nursed the Messenger of Allah PBBUH during his childhood). He stood up and said, “O Messenger of Allah, among the captives are your paternal and maternal aunts and your suckling mothers, who used to take care of you. Had we provided suckling to Al-Harith ibn Abu Shamir Al-Ghassani (an Arab Christian governor of the Levant) or Al-Nu`man ibn Al-Mundhir (the last Lakhmid king of Al-Hirah), and they afflicted us with what you have afflicted us with, we would hope for his favor and kindness. And you are indeed the best of our reared children.”

The Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) replied to them, “**Whatever belongs to me and to the children of `Abdul-Muttalib** (in terms of their share of the booty) **is yours.**”

Al-Muhajirun were encouraged by the Prophet’s (PBBUH) example of generosity and said, “And whatever is ours is for the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH).” The Ansar were inspired to do the same and gave up their shares. And so, all of them relinquished their rights, and freed and returned the captives of Hawazin to their people.

Al-Shayma’, the Foster Sister of the Prophet (PBBUH)

The delegation of Hawazin made no mistake in identifying themselves as the blood relatives of the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH). Among the captives was Al-Shayma’ bint Al-Harith bin `Abdul-`Uzza, the foster sister of the Messenger of

Allah (PBBUH). Her mother was Halimah Al-Sa`diyah, the woman who breastfed him (PBBUH) during his infancy.

The Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) recognized her and spread out his mantle for her to sit upon. He (PBBUH) then gave her the following choice: **“If you wish, you can stay with me, loved and honored. And if you wish that I provide you with supplies and you return to your people, I will do this.”** Of the two choices, his sister preferred to return to her kinfolk, and so he (PBBUH) provided her with some gifts and sent her back to her people, Banu Sa`d, in honour and dignity.

Such was the Prophet’s (PBBUH) generous comportment and actions towards whoever had ever done him a favor. Gratitude was part of his inner core, and his kindness was always present and waiting for anyone with an injured heart.

Malik ibn `Awf Embraces Islam

The Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) asked the delegation of the Hawazin about what had become of Malik ibn `Awf. They told him that he remained in Al-Ta`if with the Thaqif tribe. He (PBBUH) asked them to inform him that if he came to him as a believer, he (PBBUH) would release his captive family, return his possessions to him, and give him a hundred camels.

On hearing about this promise from the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH), Malik did not hesitate to accept it. He concealed himself and rode his horse away from Al-Ta`if at night, for fear that he would be prevented if his people knew his intentions.

Malik caught up with the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) at Al-Ji`ranah and proclaimed his embrace of Islam. The Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) returned to him his family and property and gave him a hundred camels.

He (PBBUH) put Malik in charge of those who embraced Islam from his kinfolk. But, as shall be seen later, the majority of the Thaqif tribe remained in their disbelief.

The Portions of the Booty Assigned to Recent Muslims

The Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) started to divide the booty and began with the category known as *Al-Mu'allafatu Qulubuhum* (literally, those whose hearts were reconciled to Islam), which comprised recent Muslims from among the dignitaries of the Quraysh whose hearts still needed to be won closer to Islam. He (PBBUH) gave Abu Sufyan ibn Harb forty ounces of silver and a hundred camels, yet Abu Sufyan demanded, "What about my son Yazid?" So, he (PBBUH) gave his son Yazid a similar share.

Although Abu Sufyan was granted what he asked for, he demanded still more, "What about my son Mu`awiyah?" So, the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) gave his second son Mu`awiyah the same share as them. Abu Sufyan said in gratitude, "May my father and mother be ransomed for you. You are generous in war and in peace. I fought you in battle, and what a good fighter you are! And I made peace with you, and what a good man of peace you are! This is very generous. May Allah reward you well."

The Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) gave a hundred camels each to the following men: Hakim ibn Hizam, Safwan ibn Umayyah (at that time he was still a disbeliever and became a Muslim afterwards), Qais ibn `Adi, Huwaytib ibn `Abd Al-`Uzza, and other personalities of the Quraysh. Other men received forty or fifty camels each.

The Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) then began to distribute the shares of the warriors: four camels and forty sheep to every footman, and twenty camels and a hundred sheep to every horseman.

The share of the Ansar was the same as that given to the warriors, unlike the large portions assigned to the chief dignitaries of the Quraysh.

The Reaction of the Ansar to the Large Portions Given to Recent Muslims

Though the wisdom of his actions was not understood at the beginning, the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) pursued a wise policy in the distribution of the booty, which aimed at evoking friendship in the hearts of those who had yesterday been his enemies.

Among themselves, the Ansar protested about what the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) did, until one of them said, “By Allah, the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) has met his own people (tribesmen).” Others among the Ansar also said, “May Allah forgive the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH)! He gives to the Quraysh and neglects us when our swords are still dripping with their blood.”

The chief of the Ansar, Sa`d ibn `Ubadah, went to the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) and informed him of the displeasure expressed by the Ansar about the issue of the booty. The Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) asked, **“Where do you stand on this matter, O Sa`d?”** Sa`d replied, “O Messenger of Allah, I am only one of my people.” So, the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) ordered that the Ansar alone be assembled for him. When all the members of the Ansar were gathered together, the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) went to them, and the following dialogue took place:

The Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) said, **“O people of the Ansar, what are these words that have been conveyed to me about you? (About) a sense of anger against me inside yourselves? Did I not come to you when you were misguided, and Allah guided you (through me)? Poor, and Allah made you rich? Enemies, and Allah united your hearts?”**

The Ansar replied, “Yes, indeed, Allah and His Messenger are far more generous and better.”

He (PBBUH) said, **“Why do you not answer me, O people of the Ansar?”**

The Ansar replied, “With what shall we answer you, O Messenger of Allah, when all graces and favors (bestowed upon us) belong to Allah and His Messenger?”

He (PBBUH) said, **“By Allah, if you wished, you could have said in reply – and you would have spoken the truth and been believed: You came to us rejected (by your people), and we believed you; forsaken, and we supported you; driven out (from your homeland), and we sheltered you; needy, and we consoled you.**

O people of the Ansar, you have felt anger inside of yourselves against me because of some trifle things of life by which I reconciled the hearts of some people so that they may become Muslims, and I entrusted you to your Islam (i.e., to your strong faith).

O people of the Ansar, are you not satisfied that people should go away with sheep and camels, while you take back with you the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) to your homes?

By Him in Whose Hand is the soul of Muhammad, had it not been for the Hijrah (the migration from Makkah to Madinah), I would have been one of the Ansar. And if all the people went one way and the Ansar went the other, I would take the way of the Ansar. O Allah, have mercy upon the Ansar, and upon the children of the Ansar, and upon the offspring of the children of the Ansar.”

By the time the Prophet (PBBUH) concluded his words, which overflowed with love for the people of the Ansar who pledged their allegiance to him, supported him, cherished him, and held him in the highest esteem, everyone among the Ansar began to weep until their beards became wet with tears. They

said, “We are satisfied with the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) as our portion and share.”

The Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) departed, and the people dispersed.

`Umrah from Al-Ji`ranah and Heading Back to Madinah

After the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) finished dividing the booty among the men at Al-Ji`ranah, he proceeded from there to Makkah to perform `Umrah. Having completed `Umrah, he (PBBUH) assigned `Attab ibn Usaid to run the affairs of Makkah and entrusted the Islamic education of its people to Mu`adh ibn Jabal. The Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) then returned with the Ansar to Madinah. Their arrival was in the month of Dhul-Qa`dah in the 8th year of Hijrah.

The Most Significant Events Between Hunain and Tabuk

The Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) returned to Madinah after achieving the Conquest of Makkah, the Victory of Hunain, and the siege of Al-Ta'if. Such successes further impressed upon the souls of all the Arabs the notion of his invincibility. Allah-given support and help always surrounded him (PBBUH), and no tongue dared to utter a single word against him.

All these advances in the interest of Islam deeply affected the sovereigns and chiefs of the region. Moreover, they ushered in a new stage in the course of the *Da`wah* (call to Islam), in which people and tribes willingly raced to embrace Islam. There was still fighting and resistance going on, but it was not on the same scale of aggressiveness and difficulty as previous challenges.

The following is an account of the most significant incidents that occurred between Hunain and Tabuk:

First: The Poet Ka`b ibn Zuhair Embraces Islam

The momentous developments occurring in the area exerted such great influence on the Arabs that Bujair ibn Zuhair, the brother of a poet named Ka`b who used to slander and defame the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH), wrote a warning letter to him upon the departure of the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) from Al-Ta'if.

Ka`b composed poems satirizing the Prophet (PBBUH), and so his brother warned him that the Prophet (PBBUH) had ordered the execution of some men in Makkah who had satirized him.

Bujair advised his brother to either repent and seek the pardon of the Prophet (PBBUH) or escape to another place on earth. Ka`b decided on

repentance and arrived in Madinah just as the Prophet (PBBUH) was finishing the morning prayer. Ka`b expressed his apology and repentance and declared his faith in Islam.

Ka`b then recited a poem in praise of the Prophet (PBBUH) – consisting of fifty-eight verses – which became known as *Banat Su`ad*. After Ka`b had recited the poem, the Prophet (PBBUH) said to him, **“I wish you would mention the Ansar in a good way, for they deserve this.”** So, Ka`b recited a thirteen-verse poem in which he praised the Ansar.

By Ka`b embracing Islam, it can be confidently said that the era of poets opposing the *Da`wah* and spreading malicious propaganda against Islam came to an end, and the role of slander, defamation, and character assassination played by such poets ended as well.

Among the poets who defamed the Prophet (PBBUH) with their poetry and then repented and embraced Islam prior to Ka`b were Dirar ibn Khattab, `Abdullah ibn Al-Zab`ari, Abu Sufyan ibn Al-Harith, Al-Harith ibn Hisham, and Al-`Abbas ibn Mirdas. They abandoned their earlier hostile positions and sided firmly with Islam. Some of them defended it and fought for it, not only with their words, but also with their swords.

Second: Organizing the Collection and Distribution of *Zakah*

Following his return to Madinah, the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) started to organize the process of assessing and collecting *Zakah* (obligatory charity). Once a tribe entered Islam, it was part of his guidance (PBBUH) to take care to provide it with Islamic education, organize the collection of *Zakah*, and assign the person who would be responsible for the task.

In the beginning of the 9th year of Hijrah, the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) dispatched the *Zakah* collectors to the different tribes whose people had embraced Islam. Accordingly, the Prophet (PBBUH) sent:

1. `Uyainah ibn Hisn to Banu Tamim.
2. Yazid ibn Husain to Aslam and Ghifar.
3. `Amr ibn Al-`As to Banu Fazarah.
4. Bashir ibn Sufyan to Banu Ka`b.
5. `Ali ibn Abu Talib to Najran.

In addition, other men were also assigned as *Zakah* workers in the various lands that became Muslim. They were known as “*Al-Musadiqin*.” In connection to this, two measures were established and approved to regulate the collection of *Zakah*:

1. Scrutiny of *Zakah* Collectors

The Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) watched over the *Zakah* collectors and called them to account for all amounts of *Zakah* gathered and dispensed. As happened with one of the *Zakah* collectors, when he returned from his mission, he said, “This is for you, and this was presented to me as a gift.”

The Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) stood up on the pulpit, praised and glorified Allah, and delivered this sermon: **“What is the matter with a worker I had sent out, who said, ‘This is for you, and this was presented to me as a gift?’ Why did he not sit in the house of his father or the house of his mother and see whether gifts will be given to him or not? By the One in Whose Hand is the soul of Muhammad, anyone of you who takes anything from it (collected *Zakah* money) except that he will come on the Day of Resurrection, carrying it on his neck. O Allah! Have I conveyed (Your Commandments)?”**

2. Verifying News before Reacting

The Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) sent Al-Walid ibn Uqbah ibn Abu Mu`it to collect *Zakah* from the tribe of Banu Al-Mustaliq. Upon learning of his arrival, twenty men carrying their weapons went out to welcome him, and they had with them the camels for *Zakah*. Upon seeing them, Al-Walid thought that they wanted

to fight him on account of an old feud between him and them from the time of *Jabilyyah* (pre-Islamic age of ignorance).

Based on this incorrect assumption, Al-Walid hurried back to Madinah and claimed before the Prophet (PBBUH) that Banu Al-Mustaliq had reverted from Islam and refused to give him the *Zakah*. To investigate the matter, the Prophet (PBBUH) dispatched Khalid ibn Al-Walid with a secret battalion. His first finding was that when he approached the district of Banu Al-Mustaliq, he heard the morning Azan being recited. Then, when Khalid met the people, he observed only obedience in their actions.

Khalid returned and informed the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) what he had seen of them. The situation was not as Al-Walid ibn Uqbah had reported it to be, so the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) sent another man to Banu Al-Mustaliq to take the *Zakah* from them.

Commenting on this incident, Allah the Exalted sent down this Qur'anic verse: "O you who believe! If a rebellious evil person comes to you with news, verify it, lest you harm people in ignorance, and afterwards you become regretful of what you have done." (Al-Hujurat 49:6)

Third: Dispatching Squadrons

In the same way that the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) sent out collectors to gather *Zakah* from the various tribes, certain circumstances demanded the dispatch of several *Saraya* (squadrons) to create security over all the regions of Arabia.

1. The *Sariyya* (Squadron) Headed by Qutbah ibn `Amir

In Safar of the 9th year of Hijrah, the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) sent Qutbah ibn `Amir with twenty men to a district of the Kath`am tribe, in a place called Tabalah. They only had ten camels with them, which they rode in turns. Qutbah made an attack on them and fierce fighting went on until a great number

of both parties were wounded. In the end, the Muslims were the ones victorious and carried away with them the booty, but Qutbah was among those killed.

2. The *Sariyya* (Squadron) Headed by Al-Dahhak ibn Sufyan Al-Kilabi

In Rabi` Al-Awwal of the 9th year of Hijrah, the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) sent Al-Dahhak ibn Sufyan to Banu Kilab to call them to embrace Islam. They refused Islam and started to fight the Muslims. The confrontation concluded with the defeat of Banu Kilab, and one of their men was killed.

3. The *Sariyya* (Squadron) Headed by `Alqamah ibn Mujzar Al-Mudlaji

In Rabi` Al-Akhar of the 9th year of Hijrah, the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) was informed that a group of Abyssinians (Ethiopians) were seen gathered together by the people of Jeddah, wanting to raid them. The Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) sent `Alqamah with a unit of men against that assembled group of Abyssinians. Once they saw the arrival of the Muslims, they fled. No fighting took place and `Alqamah and his men returned.

Sporadic Events

1. The Death of Zainab

Zainab was the greatest of the Prophet's (PBBUH) daughters. During her departure from Makkah, she was pursued and attacked with a lance by the disbelievers. As a result, she suffered a miscarriage, and continued in ill health until she died.

With her death, none of the Prophet's (PBBUH) children remained except Fatimah. The Prophet (PBBUH) was very saddened by the death of Zainab. She would always be remembered for her beautiful merits and gracious loyalty to her husband Abu Al-`As ibn Al-Rabi` for whom she gave away the necklace gifted

to her by her mother Khadijah to release him from captivity subsequent to the Battle of Badr.

According to other accounts, Zainab died in Muharram of the 8th year of Hijrah.

2. The Birth of Ibrahim

After the death of Zainab, Allah's consolation and comfort came to the Prophet (PBBUH) by having a son born to him from Mayria, the Copt, in Dhul Hijjah of the 8th year of Hijrah. This event brought great joy to the Prophet (PBBUH), who at the time was sixty years of age. He (PBBUH) named his newborn after Prophet Ibrahim (Abraham PBBUH), the father of all the prophets. He (PBBUH) shaved his son's hair and gave silver equal to its weight as charity.

All the Ansar competed among themselves over who would suckle the infant. Finally, the Prophet (PBBUH) entrusted his son to the care of a wet nurse named Umm Saif, who owned seven goats.

The Battle of Tabuk

Rajab of the 9th Year of Hijrah

The Byzantines Feeling under Threat from the Growing Power of the Muslims

The Byzantines – the mightiest military power on the face of the earth at the time – were feeling anxious about their authority in the region after the Conquest of Makkah and the spread of Muslim dominion over the entire Arabian Peninsula.

The main grounds for the conflict between them and the Muslims arose when Shurahbil ibn Amr Al-Ghassani, one of the governors of the Byzantine Emperor over the Balqa district, beheaded Al-Harith ibn Umair, the envoy entrusted with delivering a letter on behalf of the Prophet (PBBUH) to the King of Busra.

As a result of this attack, the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) dispatched a *Sariyya* (Squadron) to Mu'tah under the command of Zaid ibn Harithah. Despite being small in number compared to the massive Byzantine army, the Byzantine forces failed to defeat the Muslim squadron. Even more outstanding than how the Battle of Mu'tah went was the ability of the Muslims to execute a skilled and safe retreat amid very challenging circumstances.

Such an unbalanced confrontation, and the considerable success of the Muslims despite enormous power disparities between both parties, left a strong influence on the Arabs, who were suffering under the Byzantine occupation. It generated in them increasing hopes for independence.

The Byzantines Preparing Themselves to Invade the Muslim Lands

Preparations for invading the northern borders of the Peninsula started. The aim was to demolish the power of the Muslims (that extended as far as the borders of Al-Sham) before they became too powerful to be overthrown, and stir up conflicts and unrest in the Arab territories adjacent to the Byzantines.

Driven by these fears, hardly one year had passed after the Battle of Mu'tah when Heraclius (Caesar) began mustering a mighty army from the Byzantines and subordinate Arabs, like the Ghassanide and other Arab tribes, to launch a conclusive deadly battle with the Muslims.

News of the Imminent Byzantine Attack Reaches Madinah

The assembly of forces and the preparations being made by the Byzantines for attacking the Muslims reached Madinah. The news spread out across the city, causing people to become fearful of any unusual sound, interpreting it as the arrival of the forces of Banu Al-Asfar (the blond-haired people; the Byzantines) who enjoyed a widespread reputation among the Arabs at that time for being invincible.

That was the state of the Muslims: high alertness and feeling the intensity of the situation. As for the hypocrites, their hopes were raised to the highest pitch at the prospect of realizing what they concealed in their chests, namely, destroying Islam and Muslims.

Circumstances that added to the seriousness of the situation included extremely hot weather, straitened conditions, drought, and a scarcity of riding animals. Also, at that time of the year, the fruits had just ripened, and people loved to rest beneath the shade of their crops and trees.

The Prophet's (PBBUH) Decision to Take Decisive Action

The Prophet's (PBBUH) estimation of the situation was more profound than the difficult circumstances surrounding the Muslims at the time. He (PBBUH) saw that any tardiness or passivity in facing the approaching invasion would allow the Byzantine force to access the provinces that had come under Muslim control, and they could reach as far as Madinah.

Such an action, if it took place, would have the worst possible impact on the Islamic call, and would give a chance of survival to *Jahiliyyah* (pre-Islamic age of ignorance), which was breathing its last gasps. On the other hand, the hypocrites, who were anxiously awaiting the befalling of calamities to Muslims, might contact the Byzantines and, as was their custom, try to stab the Muslims in the back.

Therefore, the Prophet (PBBUH) decided to go out and take the fight to the enemy's territory. The Muslims must fight a decisive battle against the Byzantines inside their own borders, and must do so quickly, leaving the enemy no chance of marching to Madinah.

The Prophet's (PBBUH) Call to March to the Byzantines

Once the Prophet (PBBUH) had made up his mind to pursue pre-emptive action against the Byzantines and face them in their own land, he (PBBUH) announced his intention to his Companions to begin the preparations. Usually, he (PBBUH) headed with his army to other than the destination that he alluded to be his target to mislead the enemy, but this time it was necessary to break his habit of concealing his target. The destination from Madinah to Al-Sham was difficult and far off and needed sufficient provisions and water.

The Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) sent word to the Arab tribes and all the Makkans, urging them to donate and participate in preparing the army through the wealth that Allah (Glorified be He) had bestowed on them, so that he

(PBBUH) could build and equip an army strong enough to cast fear into the hearts of the Byzantines, who formed a formidable power with great numbers and equipment.

The Reaction that the People Gave to the Prophet's (PBBUH) Call to Fight the Byzantines

There was significant variation in the reactions of the Muslims and hypocrites regarding the Prophet's (PBBUH) call to march to the Byzantines, even among the Muslims themselves. Overall, most of the Muslims raced one another to exert every effort to support the *Da`wah*. Only a few showed laxity. As for the hypocrites, they did their utmost to discourage participation and to ensure the failure of this mission.

Following is a Summary of These Different Reactions and Attitudes:

The Reaction of the Muslims

1. The Great Majority

As soon as the Muslims heard the voice of the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) calling them to fight the Byzantines, they rushed to comply with his orders and get ready for the battle. From everywhere around, the various tribes and clans began pouring into Madinah. Competition arose among the rich to spend from their wealth and give to charities to provide for the army.

Some Outstanding Examples of Giving Shown by the Muslims:

- `Uthman ibn Affan donated nine hundred camels with their saddles and supplies, one hundred horses, and ten thousand dinars, which he put into the lap of the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH). On seeing this, the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) said, **“O Allah, be pleased with `Uthman.**

I am pleased with him.” And he (PBBUH) said, **“Whatever `Uthman does after today will not harm him.”**

- Abu Bakr offered all his wealth of four thousand dirham, which made the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) ask him, **“Did you leave anything for your family?”** Abu Bakr replied, “I left them Allah and His Messenger.”
- `Umar ibn Al-Khattab offered one-half of his wealth.
- `Abdul-Rahman ibn `Awf offered two hundred ounces of silver and ten thousand dinars.
- Al-`Abbas, Talhah, and Asim ibn `Adi also donated a lot of wealth.
- Contributing to the cause of striving was not limited to the rich Muslims; the poor played a role as well. Some of them offered just a *Mudd* (554 grams) or two of dates, while others did not have anything but their own efforts to offer. Seven of the Companions whose condition was as such came to the Prophet (PBBUH). They had no means at all and wanted to join the Prophet (PBBUH) in fighting the Byzantines and asked him to provide them with a mount to ride on, but he (PBBUH) replied as the Qur'an narrates, **“I can find nothing for you to ride upon.”** They turned back while their eyes overflowed with tears out of grief that they could not find something to spend [for the Cause of Allah].” (Al-Tawbah 9:92) `Uthman, who had witnessed their request, asked the Prophet (PBBUH) to allow him to supply them with mounts and he (PBBUH) agreed.
- The women also contributed by donating whatever they could give from their jewellery.

This uplifting mood of generosity prevailed among most of the Muslims.

2. The Few Who Stayed Behind

- A group of eighty-two Bedouin men from among the recent Muslims, from the tribes of Asad and Ghatafan, came to the Prophet (PBBUH) with

pretend excuses, asking his permission to stay behind from joining the expedition of Tabuk.

- Some truthful Muslims, whose story will be told later, chose to stay behind from the Battle of Tabuk. Three of them were later indicated in the Qur'an. They were Ka`b ibn Malik, Mararah ibn Al-Rabi`, and Hilal ibn Umayyah. They slackened, and did not go out with the Muslims. It was their intention to join them at a later date, but they kept procrastinating day after day, until the army arrived at their destination.

The Reaction of the Hypocrites

The hypocrites gave all kinds of excuses to stay behind from the Battle of Tabuk and discourage others from going. Some of the excuses which they used to exclude themselves from participating were as follows:

- Some of them said, "March not forth in the heat." Allah answered them with: "Say, 'The Fire of Hell is more intense in heat, if only they could understand!'" (Al-Tawbah 9:81)
- A hypocrite named Jadd ibn Qais met the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) and said to him, "O Messenger of Allah, please permit me to stay behind and do not put me to trial. By Allah, my people know that there is no man fonder of women than I. I fear that if I see the women of Banu Al-Asfar (the Byzantines), I will not be able to control myself." The Prophet (PBBUH) turned away from him and said, "**I permit you.**"

Allah then revealed the following Qur'anic verse regarding Jadd: "And among them is he who says, 'Permit me (to remain at home) and do not put me to trial! Unquestionably, into trial they have fallen. And indeed, Hell will encompass the disbelievers.'" (Al-Tawbah 9:49)

- The leader of the hypocrite faction in Madinah, `Abdullah ibn Ubai ibn Salul, did not stop at just declaring that he would not join the expedition

with the Prophet (PBBUH) or participate in the preparations for it. He followed this up with a campaign to spread poisonous views and dishearten people from accompanying the Prophet (PBBUH) to Tabuk. In gloating tones, he mocked the Prophet's (PBBUH) determination to face the formidable Byzantines, saying, "Muhammad would invade Banu Al-Asfar (the Byzantines) despite the harsh conditions, scorching heat, and far-reaching country. Does Muhammad think that fighting against Banu Al-Asfar is something to be played with? By Allah, it is as if I am seeing his Companions tied up in ropes."

A group of hypocrites then went on repeating the words of `Abdullah ibn Ubai. They said, "Do they think that fighting against Banu Al-Asfar is like the fighting of the Arabs with one another? By Allah, as if tomorrow they will be tied up in ropes."

On being informed of what they had said, the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) sent to them Amar ibn Yasir, to verify if they had said this or not. They apologized, giving the pretext, "We were only talking idly and joking."

The Army of Distress

Despite all obstacles and barriers raised by the hypocrites and other opponents of Islam, the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) succeeded in assembling an army of thirty thousand men. Because of the severe hardships that the Muslims encountered from the day of the formation of the expedition, and throughout the journey of their marching to their destination, this army was called the "Army of Distress."

Tabuk was the last *Ghazwah* (expedition) commanded by the Prophet (PBBUH). It witnessed a significant increase in the force of the Muslims compared with Badr, the first battle led by the Prophet (PBBUH), in which the fighters with him numbered only three hundred. On this day, he (PBBUH) was

fighting with an army of thirty thousand men; that is, a hundred times stronger. All praises belong to Allah in the beginning and in the end.

The Marching out of the Army of Distress

The Prophet (PBBUH) encamped with his army at Thaniyat Al-Wada` (Pass of Al-Wada`), under the delegated command of Abu Bakr, who led the congregation in prayer during the Prophet's (PBBUH) absence, when he (PBBUH) was occupied arranging the affairs of Madinah. He (PBBUH) entrusted the government of the city to Muhammad ibn Maslamah, and the guardianship of his household to `Ali ibn Abu Talib, giving to each the necessary instructions.

The Prophet (PBBUH) then returned to take command of the army. He handed the greatest banner of his army to Abu Bakr Al-Siddiq and his other major banner of Al-Muhajirun to Al-Zubair ibn Al-`Awwam. He (PBBUH) gave the banner of Al-Aws to Usaid ibn Hudair and the banner of Al-Khazraj to Al-Habab ibn Al-Mundhir. The army then set out and encamped at Al-Jurf, a place located three miles from Madinah.

Significant Events Happening on the Road

1. The Hypocrites Making `Ali's Non-Participation a Topic of Rumors

When the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) appointed `Ali as the guardian of his family, the hypocrites said, "He (PBBUH) left him behind because he considered him too much of a burden and wanted to be rid of him."

On hearing such rumours, `Ali took his weapon and horse and set off until he caught up with the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) at his encampment at Al-Jurf. He told him about the allegations he had heard from the hypocrites and pleaded with him to allow him to participate in the expedition. The Prophet

(PBBUH) said to him, **“They lied. I have appointed you to take care of what I have left behind. So, return and be my successor over my family and your family. Would it not please you to be to me as Harun (Aaron PBBUH) was to Musa (Moses PBBUH)? Except there will be no prophet after me.”** Through these words, `Ali was soothed and headed back to Madinah.

2. Passing by the Land of the People of Thamud

The Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) marched with his army until they reached Al-Hijr, where stood the remains of the dwellings inhabited by the people of Thamud, to whom Prophet Salih (PBBUH) was sent, and they rebelliously rejected the message he (PBBUH) brought to them.

The Muslims drew water from the well available in the area and used the water to knead their dough, but the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) said to them, **“Do not drink any of its water nor perform ablutions with it. If you have used it for making dough, feed it to the camels and eat none of it.”**

According to the narration reported by Ibn `Umar, he (PBBUH) said to them, **“Do not enter the dwellings of those who wronged themselves unless (you enter) weeping, lest you should suffer the same punishment as was inflicted upon them.”**

He (PBBUH) then covered his head with his cloak and spurred his camel into a quick trot until he crossed the valley. He (PBBUH) then halted at the well from which Salih’s she-camel used to drink and told his Companions to draw water from it.

3. Scarcity of Water and the Prophet’s (PBBUH) Miracle of Increasing the Scarce Water

a. Near the Well of Salih’s She-Camel

While the Muslim army was still camping at the well from which Salih's camel used to drink, the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) turned his face to the sky and said to the people, **“Tonight, a strong wind will blow down upon you. Let no one among you stand up. Whoever among you has a camel, let him tie up its reins.”** He (PBBUH) further instructed them, **“Let no one of you go out tonight except with a companion.”**

Two men disobeyed the Prophet's (PBBUH) command and went out alone that night. One was carried away by the wind and cast at the two mountains of Tayi'. He remained there until he was brought back to Madinah by the people of Tayi'. The other one who went out got buried in the sand, and he choked and died.

When the people woke up in the morning and found that the sandstorm had filled up the well with sand and there was no longer water, they resorted to the Prophet (PBBUH) and he turned to Allah with supplications for help. Allah (the Most Generous) sent a cloud that poured down rain upon them, quenching their thirst, supplying their needs, and washing away their fear.

b. Al-Mushaqq Valley – The Spring of Tabuk

On the way to Tabuk, there was a thin streamlet that dribbled water from an upper rock in a valley called Al-Mushaqq. It issued a small amount, enough to quench the thirst of two or three persons. The Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) instructed, **“Anyone who reaches that valley before us should not drink any of its water until we arrive at it.”**

Yet, two hypocrites preceded the Muslim army in reaching the streamlet and drank of it, leaving only a little. When the Prophet (PBBUH) arrived at the rock, he asked them both, **“Did you touch any of its water?”** and they replied, “Yes.” At that, the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) became angry.

The Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) approached and scooped a little of the streamlet's water in his palm, enough to wash his face and hands, and then

allowed the used water to flow back into the stream, which suddenly began to gush so abundantly with water that every person in the army was able to quench their thirst.

About Tabuk, the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) spoke a prophecy to Mu`adh ibn Jabal, saying, **“If you live long, Mu`adh, a time will soon come when you will see this place filled with gardens.”** Allah (Exalted be He) fulfilled what he (PBBUH) foretold would take place and the land of Tabuk became filled with gardens and plentiful crops.

c. The Prophet’s (PBBUH) Camel Strays off the Path

While traveling, the Prophet’s (PBBUH) camel strayed from the path and was lost, and the Companions went out to search for it. One of the hypocrites commented on the incident and said, “Does not Muhammad claim that he is a prophet and informs you of news from heaven? How come he does not know where his camel is?”

When the Prophet (PBBUH) learned of his words, he (PBBUH) said, **“A man has said such and such. And by Allah, I can only know what Allah allows me to know, and He has guided me to its place. It is in this valley, in such-and-such a mountain pass. It was held back because its reins got stuck in a tree; so, go and bring it back to me.”**

They went and found it exactly where the Prophet (PBBUH) told them it would be and brought it back to the Prophet (PBBUH). It was narrated that this hypocrite repented and manifested good faith in Islam.

Stories of Some Companions and Their Altruistic Acts

The Companions encountered several hardships over the course of their journey to the land of Tabuk, due to the scarcity of provisions and mounts. Eighteen men had to ride the same camel by turns. Sometimes, all they had to

eat were tree leaves. When they lacked water, they had no alternative but to slaughter some of their few camels to drink the water stored in their bellies.

Despite all the hardships, the Battle of Tabuk contained glorious pictures of the sacrifices and altruistic spirit shown by the Companions, among which were the following:

a. Abu Khaythamah – Malik ibn Qais

Days after the Prophet (PBBUH) had departed with his army, Abu Khaythamah returned from traveling to his family. It was a hot day. He found his two wives, each waiting for him in an arbor in his garden. Each had cooled water and prepared food for him. Seeing this, Abu Khaythamah said to them, “The Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) is exposed to the sun, the wind, and the heat (of this harsh season), while Abu Khaythamah enjoys cool shade, prepared food, and the company of a beautiful woman. This is not fair. By Allah, I will not enter either of your arbors until I catch up with the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH).”

So, they got the provisions ready for him, and Abu Khaythamah took his sword and set out on his mount until he caught up with the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH).

b. `Umair ibn Wahb

On the way, Abu Khaythamah met `Umair ibn Wahb, who had also set out to join the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH). They accompanied each other for the rest of the journey. They drew near Tabuk and before reaching there and coming within sight, the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) told his Companions that the two approaching riders were Abu Khaythamah and `Umair ibn Wahb. They arrived and met with the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH, who invoked good upon them.

Abu Khaythamah and `Umair ibn Wahb set an example for those who had tarried and remained behind rather than setting out for the Expedition of Tabuk, after feeling the disgrace they heaped upon themselves.

c. Abu Dhar Al-Ghifari

Abu Dhar was held back from the army by his slow camel. When his attempts to prod his camel to a faster pace failed, he took his luggage, put it on his back, and set off on foot to track the army until he succeeded in catching up with the Prophet (PBBUH). When one of the Muslims saw in the distance a man approaching, walking alone, he called the Prophet's (PBBUH) attention to him. He (PBBUH) responded with hope, **“Be Abu Dhar.”**

On looking carefully at the man, the people announced that it was indeed him. The Prophet (PBBUH) said, **“May Allah have mercy on Abu Dhar. He walks alone, he dies alone, and he will be resurrected alone.”** And it all happened as he (PBBUH) announced it.

d. Dhul Bijadayn

After he became a Muslim, the family of `Abdullah Dhul Bijadayn took everything from him, even the clothes on his back. They left him with only a coarse rug to cover himself. `Abdullah cut it into two pieces, wrapping himself with one from the waist down and putting the other over his shoulders. Because of this, the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) called him *“Dhul Bijadayn”* (meaning ‘the Man with the Two Rug Pieces’).

`Abdullah Dhul-Bijadayn joined the Muslim army in the Expedition of Tabuk and begged the Prophet (PBBUH) to make a specific supplication for him. “Ask that Allah may grant me martyrdom.” Instead, the Prophet (PBBUH) patted him on his shoulder and said, **“O Allah forbid that his blood be spilled by the disbelievers.”** Dhul-Bijadayn said, “That is not what I wanted,” to which the Prophet (PBBUH) replied, **“If you go out as a fighter in the Way of Allah and**

catch a fever and die, you are a martyr! And if your mount throws you off and you fall and break your neck, you are a martyr!”

Dhul Bijadayn fell ill during his stay in Tabuk and was granted martyrdom in the manner foretold by the Prophet (PBBUH). His burial took place at night. The Prophet (PBBUH) was down in the grave, while Abu Bakr and `Umar held his body and lowered him to the Prophet (PBBUH), who supplicated for him, saying, **“O Allah, I have entered the night pleased with him, so be pleased with him.”** Hearing this, Ibn Mas`ud commented, “I wish I was the owner of this hole (grave).”

The Muslim Army Arrives at Tabuk and the Byzantines Withdraw

Seven days after their departure from Madinah the Muslim army continued marching until they entered the outskirts of Tabuk, where they camped ready to face the enemy, despite experiencing an immense shortage of equipment and supplies.

The Byzantines and their allies learned of the marching of the Muslims, and their immediate reaction was terror. It struck them to such an extent that they did not dare to advance. Preferring to withdraw and avoid confrontation, they dispersed themselves inside their territory. They considered that in Mu`tah they were facing only three thousand men, and they were difficult and unconquerable enough. How would combat go with a force of thirty thousand men?

Panic and fear filled the Byzantines and restrained them from advancing, and the news of their withdrawal was conveyed to the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH), so he (PBBUH) saw no point in pursuing them inside their land. He (PBBUH) stayed in Tabuk for some ten nights and then returned to Madinah.

No battle took place in Tabuk; rather, only a sudden and complete retreat by the Byzantines. The Expedition of Tabuk made a great impression throughout

the Arabian Peninsula and left the Muslims with a high reputation inside and outside it.

Treaties with the People of the Frontiers

The Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) stayed at the frontiers for some time in order to secure the safety of the region. He (PBBUH) fought those who needed to be overcome with a struggle, and made treaties with the rulers of the region who sought peaceful agreements with him. Concluded treaties mainly included the following lands:

Aylah

The City of Aylah was located at the northern end of the Gulf of Aqaba. Its governor, Yuhanna ibn Ru'bah, saw the outcome of the confrontation between the Muslims and the Byzantines, and the fleeing of the Byzantines from fighting the Prophet (PBBUH). Therefore, Yuhanna came and made peace with the Prophet (PBBUH) and paid *Jizyah*¹, and he (PBBUH) gave him a covenant of protection which read:

“This is a guarantee of protection from Allah and Muhammad, the Prophet, to Yuhanna ibn Ru'bah and the people of Aylah, for their ships and caravans by land and sea. They and those with them from Syria, Yemen, and the seamen, all have the protection of Allah and Muhammad, the Prophet... It shall not be legitimate to prevent them from using a well, or a road on land or sea, which they have been in the habit of using.”

When the treaty was concluded, the Prophet (PBBUH) presented Yuhanna with a mantle woven in Yemen and extended to him every courtesy and care. It was further agreed that Aylah should pay a yearly *Jizyah* of three hundred dinars.

¹ Poll tax required from non-Muslims living in a Muslim state.

Through this treaty, the Muslim trade route passing through the Levant and Egypt was secured.

Jarba and Adhruh

The people of Jarba and Adhruh came to the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) and made peace with him on condition of paying *Jizyah*. He (PBBUH) gave them a protection document in which he stated: **“In the Name of Allah, the Most Merciful, the Ever-Merciful. This is a document from Muhammad, the Prophet, to the people of Jarba and Adhruh. They are secure under the protection of Allah and Muhammad. They shall pay one hundred dinars each Rajab, complete and good. Allah is their Guarantor that they will be sincere and kind to the Muslims.”**

Mina'

The people of Mina' made peace with the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH), and he (PBBUH) gave them a protection guarantee in which it was agreed that they should in return give one-fourth of the fruits produced in their territory.

The Mission Assigned to Khalid ibn Al-Walid at Dumat Al-Jandal

After the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) secured the position of the tribes situated at the frontiers and made covenants of peace with them, he (PBBUH) recognized that an uprising might be expected from Ukaidir ibn `Abdul-Malik, the Christian governor of Dumat Al-Jandal (a fortress near Tabuk), and that the Byzantines could assist him in such a move against the Muslims.

To forestall such a threat, the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) dispatched Khalid bin Al-Walid at the head of four hundred and twenty horsemen to Ukaidir ibn `Abdul-Malik, and he (PBBUH) told Khalid that he would find him hunting wild cows.

Khalid ibn Al-Walid rode with his cavalymen until he approached the fortress where Ukaydir was staying. That night, as it was a moonlit night, Khalid could see Ukaydir on the roof of his fortress. Ukaydir's attention was caught up by some wild cows rubbing their horns against his palace gate, and this enticed him to come out of the fortress to hunt them. He had only his brother and a few guards in his company, and soon they were surrounded and captured by Khalid, who was lying in wait outside. His brother started fighting and was killed.

Khalid brought Ukaydir to the Prophet (PBBUH), who spared his life and made peace with him for the payment of *Jizyah*. He (PBBUH) then released him, and Ukaydir returned to his people as an ally of the Muslims.

The Prophet (PBBUH) concluded treaties with several other tribes. Amid such major changes in the situation, the tribes, who had previously allied with the Byzantines, became quite certain that their dependence on their former masters had ended, and they took the side of the Muslims.

The Muslim state thus enlarged and annexed the borders of the Byzantine territory. Finally, the role played by the agents of the Byzantines in the region was brought to an end.

Returning to Madinah

Tabuk ended after fifty days. Almighty Allah spared the believers the hardship of fighting, and the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) returned home with his army victorious and unharmed.

As soon as the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) entered Madinah, he (PBBUH) visited the mosque and offered two Ra`kahs (units of prayer). He (PBBUH) then sat to receive the people. Those who had remained behind during the expedition started to show up and offered all kinds of excuses for not participating and confirmed them with oaths.

The Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) accepted their outward pretense of faith, leaving their inner intentions to Almighty Allah.

Dirar Mosque

The Mosque of Dirar (literally the Mosque of harm/injury/damage to others) was built by a man named Abu `Amir *Al-Rahib* (the monk). He was known for his intense hatred of the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) and Islam and had adopted a hostile position during the battles of Badr and Uhud. Because of this, the Prophet (PBBUH) nicknamed him Abu `Amir *Al-Fasiq* (the corrupt).

`Amir Al-Rahib asked the Byzantines for help in invading Madinah, and Heraclius promised to give him that help. Meanwhile, he wrote to a group of his hypocrite supporters in Madinah ordering them to build him a stronghold in Madinah. They began constructing a mosque for this purpose right beside Quba' Mosque. It was to be a place in which the hypocrites could gather to organize their activities aimed at dividing the Muslims and twisting and distorting Allah's Words.

They finished constructing their mosque before the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) departed for the Tabuk expedition. They asked him to come and pray in it to have him give legitimacy to it. They told him that they had built it for the weak and sick people, especially during the cold days of winter. But Allah protected the Prophet (PBBUH) from praying in their mosque. He (PBBUH) was about to set out with his Companions to Tabuk, so he asked them to wait until he came back. He (PBBUH) said, **“We are about to travel, but when we return, if Allah wills.”**

Only a day's journey or less was separating the Prophet (PBBUH) from returning from Tabuk to Madinah. At that time, Angel Jibril (PBUH) descended to reveal to him the reality of the Mosque of Dirar, and the evil intentions of those who had built it, including their desire to use it as a base from which to

sow dissension between the believers regarding Quba' Mosque, which was built, from the very first day, upon righteousness.

The newly created mosque of the hypocrites had to be destroyed; the Prophet (PBBUH) sent men with orders to destroy it before he returned to Madinah.

Regarding the Mosque of Dirar, Allah (Exalted be He) revealed His Saying:

“And (there are) those (hypocrites) who took for themselves a mosque for causing harm and disbelief and division among the believers and as a station for whoever had warred against Allah and His Messenger aforetime. And they will surely swear, ‘We intended only the best.’ And Allah testifies that indeed they are liars. Do not stand (for prayer) within it – ever. A mosque founded on righteousness from the first day is more worthy for you to stand in. Within it are men who love to purify themselves; and Allah loves those who purify themselves.” (Al-Tawbah 9:107-108)

The Men Who Lagged behind Tabuk Come and Make Excuses

Following the Prophet's (PBBUH) return to Madinah victorious from the Battle of Tabuk with the entire Arabian Peninsula under his control, the men who had stayed behind started to present themselves before him and offer their excuses. They were of two categories: Muslims and hypocrites.

1- Hypocrites:

The Prophet (PBBUH) accepted from the hypocrites whatever false excuses they offered and left their inner intentions to Almighty Allah. Regarding them, Allah revealed His Saying:

“Those who made excuses from the Bedouins came (to you, O Prophet) asking your permission to exempt them (from the battle), and those who had lied to Allah and His Messenger sat at home (without asking the permission for it); a painful torment will seize those of them who disbelieve.” (Al-Tawbah 9:90)

2-Muslims:

The Muslims who stayed behind from joining the Expedition of Tabuk were of two categories:

a-Muslims with Valid Excuses

Such as the weak, the sick, and the poor who had no means to equip and supply themselves, and those who had weapons but no mounts to ride upon. The Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) asked them to excuse him for having no mounts with which to provide them. They turned back with their eyes shedding tears, a situation that earned them the name of “the Weepers.”

Allah pardoned all persons in this category of Muslims and revealed about them:

“There is no blame on those who are weak or ill or who find no resources to spend, if they are sincere and true (in duty) to Allah and His Messenger. There is not upon the doers of good any cause (for blame). And Allah is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful. Nor (is there blame) upon those who, when they came to you that you might give them mounts, you said, ‘I can find no mounts for you,’ they turned back, while their eyes overflowing with tears of grief that they could not find anything to spend (for the Cause of Allah).” (Al-Tawbah 9:91-92)

Regarding them, when the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) was returning from the Expedition of Tabuk, and had drawn close to Al-Madinah, he (PBBUH) said, **“In Al-Madinah there are people who, as you travelled and crossed valleys, were with you.”** The Companions asked, “O Messenger of Allah, even though they are in Al-Madinah?” He (PBBUH) said, **“Even though they were in Al-Madinah. They were kept behind by (legitimate) excuses.”**

b. The Three Muslims Who Stayed behind without Valid Excuses

As previously mentioned, three Muslims of unimpeachable faith stayed behind from the Battle of Tabuk without valid excuses, and, namely, they were: Ka`b ibn Malik, Murarah ibn Al-Rabi`, and Hilal ibn Umayyah.

When the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) returned from the Expedition of Tabuk, and was sitting in the mosque after having offered two *Rak`ahs*, Ka`b ibn Malik came to speak to him. He (PBBUH) asked him, **“What made you stay behind?”** Ka`b confessed that he had no excuse. “By Allah, I had no (valid) excuse. By Allah, I was never stronger or richer than I was when I did not join you (for the Battle of Tabuk).” The Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) replied, **“As for this (person), he has spoken the truth. So get up until Allah passes judgement on you.”**

Murarah ibn Al-Rabi` and Hilal ibn Umayyah did the same as Ka`b and confessed, and the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) forbade the Muslims from talking to the three of them. All people complied and avoided them, and the three men stayed away and confined themselves to their homes.

Ka`b ibn Malik was the youngest of the three and was the bravest of them. He would go out and attend the congregational prayers with the Muslims. He would even approach the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) after prayer and extend greetings of peace to him and would pray close to him to steal a glance at him.

The Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) would look at Ka`b when he came for prayer, but when Ka`b turned towards him, he (PBBUH) would turn away from him.

After the passage of forty nights the seclusion imposed on the three who stayed behind was increased by the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH), who ordered the three men to isolate themselves from their wives. Hilal ibn Umayyah was poor and old, so his wife went to the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) and requested that her husband be excluded from that order and that she be allowed to serve him

because he was a poor, old man with no servant. The Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) allowed her to do so.

This distressing situation remained until the earth, vast as it was, felt straitened for the three. Only on the fiftieth night, at *Fajr* (Dawn) Prayer, did Allah's Pardon for them descend in His Saying:

“And (He also forgave) the three who were left behind (and regretted their error) to the point that the earth closed in on them in spite of its vastness and their souls confined them and they were certain that there is no refuge from Allah except in Him. Then He turned to them so they could repent. Indeed, Allah is the Accepting of repentance, the Merciful.” (Al-Tawbah 9:118)

Worldly Punishment Is Lighter than That of the Hereafter

It might be wondered why the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) punished these three Muslim men even though they confessed their guilt, and he (PBBUH) knew them to be truthful; and on the other hand, He (PBBUH) did not punish the hypocrites and accepted their excuses although he knew them to be lying.

The Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) wanted good for these three. In a hadith, he (PBBUH) said, **“When Allah loves a servant, he hastens for him the punishment in this world before the Day of Resurrection.”** (Or as he, PBBUH, said) His punishment of them and his firmness with them in this world was out of love for them to lighten the punishment they might receive in the Hereafter. “Indeed, He (Allah) turned to them so they could repent. Indeed, Allah is the Accepting of repentance.”

As for the hypocrites, the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) left their intentions to Allah Who warns them of severe torment in His Saying: **“A painful torment will seize those of them who disbelieve.”** (Al-Tawbah 9:90)

The Most Significant Events of the Year 9 A.H. and the Beginning of the Year 10. A.H

The Expedition of Tabuk established itself as the most crucial event of the year 9 A.H. Besides the Battle of Tabuk, there were other events that took place at the end of the year 9. A.H. and the beginning of the year 10 A.H. The most significant among them were:

The Death of Umm Kulthum

Umm Kulthum was the Prophet's (PBBUH) daughter. She married `Uthman ibn `Affan after the death of her sister Ruqaiyyah. She died in Sha`ban of the 9th year after Hijrah (migration from Makkah to Madinah). When she died, the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) said to `Uthman, **“If I had a third (unmarried) daughter, I would have married her to you.”**

The Death of the Chief of the Hypocrites

`Abdullah ibn Ubai ibn Salul, commonly referred to as the Chief of the Hypocrites, fell ill in the last days of Shawwal and died in Dhul Qa`dah of the 9th year of Hijrah.

When `Abdullah ibn Ubai died, his son, `Abdullah ibn `Abdullah, came to the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) and asked him to give him his shirt to shroud his father in, and the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) agreed.

`Abdullah ibn `Abdullah also asked the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) to offer the funeral prayer for his father, and the Messenger of Allah stood up to offer the funeral prayer for him.

“I Have Been Given the Choice, and I Have Chosen”

When the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) stood up to perform the funeral prayer for `Abdullah ibn Ubai, `Umar took hold of his garment and said, “O Messenger of Allah! Are you going to offer the funeral prayer for him even though your Lord has forbidden you to do so?” The Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) replied, **“My Lord has given me the choice, for He says: ‘Ask forgiveness for them, (O Muhammad), or do not ask forgiveness for them. If you should ask forgiveness for them seventy times – never will Allah forgive them.’ (Al-Tawbah 9:80) Verily, I will ask (for forgiveness for him) more than seventy times.”** Umar said, “He is a hypocrite!” But the Beloved Prophet (PBBUH), the mercy sent to humankind, offered the funeral prayer for him. Upon that, Allah (Exalted be He) revealed His Saying:

“And do not pray (the funeral prayer, O Muhammad), over any of them (hypocrites) who has died - ever - or stand at his grave.” (Al-Tawbah 9:84)

Following the revelation of this prohibition order, the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) never again prayed for any of the hypocrites who died.

The Wisdom and Farsightedness of the Prophet (PBBUH)

The way the Prophet (PBBUH) acted concerning `Abdullah ibn Ubai had underlying reasons, among which were the following:

- a. Judging by the outward state of the person, which was a profession of Islam (even if only on the surface). The Prophet’s (PBBUH) kind action also bestowed honor upon his son `Abdullah, who was one of the best Companions. Out of his sincere devotion, `Abdullah asked the permission of the Prophet (PBBUH) to kill his own father for the vile remark¹ he made during the Expedition of Banu Al-Mustaliq.

¹ The vile remark that `Abdullah ibn Ubai made was: “If we return to Madinah, indeed the more honorable will expel therefrom the meaner.”

- b. Attracting the hearts of the followers of `Abdullah ibn Ubai in the hope that they could be influenced and saved from their hypocrisy, since many hypocrites were loyal supporters of Ibn Salul.
- c. Refusing to fulfil the son's request to offer prayer for his father, before the revelation of the direct divine prohibition against seeking forgiveness for hypocrites, would have been tantamount to bringing shame and disgrace to his son and his folks. The Prophet (PBBUH) chose the best of the two political options until he was explicitly forbidden to ask forgiveness for hypocrites, to which he (PBBUH) complied.
- d. Giving his shirt as a burial shroud for `Abdullah ibn Ubai was because part of the Prophet's (PBBUH) character was not to turn down a requester's plea. He (PBBUH) also gave his shirt as a return favor; `Abdullah ibn Ubai gave his shirt to the Prophet's (PBBUH) uncle, Al-`Abbas, when he was captured during the Battle of Badr.

Decline of Hypocrisy

With the death of `Abdullah ibn Ubai, the hypocrisy movement declined with the collapse of the leader of the hypocrite faction in Madinah. Most of the remaining party preferred to make genuine repentance to Allah (Exalted be He). The few who chose to keep to their position hardly had any significant presence and were known only to the Prophet's (PBBUH) secret keeper, Hudhaifah ibn Al-Yaman.

Later on, `Umar did not offer the funeral prayer for a deceased person of unknown state unless Hudhaifah ibn Al-Yaman first offered the funeral prayer for them, since he was the only person who knew those few remaining hypocrites, because the Prophet (PBBUH) confided to him their identities.

Abu Bakr Performs Hajj

During the previous years, the Muslims had been barred from performing the duty of Hajj due to the prevention measures imposed upon them by the Quraysh. In the Hajj of the year 8 A.H., `Atab ibn Usaid was charged with leading the pilgrims in their pilgrimage. At that time, the pilgrimage rites of the Muslims were not different from the rites of the *Mushrikin* (those who associate others with Allah in His Divinity or worship).

When the season for Hajj approached, the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) wanted to perform Hajj, but he (PBBUH) hated to be present alongside naked polytheist pilgrims performing their rituals and circumambulating the House. He (PBBUH), therefore, deferred his pilgrimage until Allah (Exalted be He) decided the matter concerning the pilgrimage of the *Mushrikin*.

As time passed and Dhul-Qa`dah of the year 9 A.H. arrived, the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) sent Abu Bakr Al-Siddiq as commander of the Hajj caravan. Abu Bakr was accompanied by a large group of the Companions. They went ahead, driving with them their sacrificial animals.

While Abu Bakr was on the way, just a few days after his departure from Madinah, Chapter Bara`ah (also called Chapter of Al-Tawbah: The Repentance) was revealed, giving important legislations about the dealings between the Muslims and the *Mushrikin*.

The Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) wanted to inform his Companions going on Hajj about the Chapter of Al-Tawbah, and so he sent `Ali towards Makkah to catch up with Abu Bakr. Hurriedly, `Ali rode out until he caught up with him at Dhul-Hulaifah.

Seeing `Ali approaching, Abu Bakr asked him, "Are you here as a commander (of us) or as a follower?" `Ali replied, "Rather, as a follower (of you)," and he told him about the mission he had been assigned to deliver. Then they both proceeded together.

Abu Bakr led the people in Hajj, and when they were camping at Mina, Abu Bakr asked `Ali to stand up to recite for the people the beginning of the Chapter of Al-Tawbah, with Abu Hurairah next to him, helping him convey the Qur'anic verses:

“Freedom from (all) obligations (is declared) from Allah and His Messenger to those of the *Mushrikin* with whom you made a treaty.

So, travel freely (O *Mushrikin*) for four months (as you will) throughout the land, but know that you cannot escape (from the Punishment of) Allah, and Allah will disgrace the disbelievers.

And a declaration from Allah and His Messenger to humankind on the greatest day (the 10th of Dhul-Hijjah) that Allah is free from (all) obligations to the *Mushrikin* and so is His Messenger. So, if you (*Mushrikin*) repent, it is better for you, but if you turn away, then know that you cannot escape (from the Punishment of) Allah. And give tidings (O Muhammad) of a painful torment to those who disbelieve.” (Al-Tawbah 9:1-3)

`Ali continued reciting until he reached Allah's Saying:

“That is the correct religion, so do not wrong yourselves during them. And fight against the *Mushrikin* collectively as they fight against you collectively. And know that Allah is with the righteous (who fear Him).” (Al-Tawbah 9:36)

After completing the recitation of the Qur'anic verses, `Ali paused a little and then uttered these four legislations:

1. No disbeliever will enter Paradise.
2. No naked person will be permitted to circumambulate the Ka`bah.
3. No *Mushrik* (sing. of *Mushrikin*) will be permitted to perform Hajj after this year.

4. If any *Mushrik* has a covenant with the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH), it shall be valid until its expiry time (and will not be extended further).

These Qur'anic verses of Al-Tawbah announced a four-month respite for the *Mushrikin* who had no treaty with the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH). Accordingly, the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) gave the *Mushrikin* a four-month respite period from the day of the announcement of the legislation to allow people to return to their secure places and lands, after which no treaty or covenant would be valid for a *Mushrik*, except for those who previously had a covenant with the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) to a specific time until the end of its term.

This announcement was tantamount to declaring the end of the era of idol worship across the Arabian Peninsula; no more idols would be worshipped from this year onwards.

Death of the Prophet's (PBBUH) Son, Ibrahim

Ibrahim, the Prophet's (PBBUH) son from his Coptic wife Mariya, was the delight of his eye. Whenever he (PBBUH) had finished fulfilling the day's tasks towards Allah and His Message, he would visit his son and see him grow and prosper and resemble him more each day. This happiness did not last long. Ibrahim fell extremely ill upon reaching sixteen months of age. His mother and her sister, Sirin, looked after him but his condition did not improve. The Prophet (PBBUH) arrived when his son was breathing his last breath.

The Prophet's (PBBUH) eyes began shedding tears, and he (PBBUH) said, "The eyes are shedding tears, and the heart is grieved, and we will not say except what pleases our Lord. O Ibrahim, indeed, we are grieved at parting with you."

Al-Fadl ibn Al-`Abbas washed the body of Ibrahim, and he was taken for burial at Al-Baqi` cemetery. The Prophet (PBBUH) laid him in his grave, smoothed the sand over it and sprinkled some water over it.

The Eclipse of the Sun Coincides with the Death of Ibrahim

The death of Ibrahim coincided with the eclipse of the sun, a phenomenon the Muslims saw as a miracle. They went about saying that the sun was eclipsed in sadness over Ibrahim's death. Hearing this, the Prophet (PBBUH) forgot about his personal grief, and conscious and committed to his message, he stood preaching to the people. He (PBBUH) said, **“The sun and the moon are two of Allah's Signs. They are eclipsed neither for the death nor the birth of any person. On beholding an eclipse, therefore, make haste to remember Allah with prayer.”**

The Delegations

The various Arabs (Bedouin tribes) delayed their acceptance of Islam, waiting for the outcomes of the warring and fighting that the Quraysh were waging against the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH). They used to say, “Leave him and his people alone. If he is victorious over them, he is a (true) prophet.”

Then the Conquest of Makkah came and put a complete end to idolatry, and the Quraysh embraced Islam. The Arabs clearly distinguished truth from falsehood, especially after the Battle of Tabuk, and decided on their position.

The different Arab tribes started to send their delegations from all over the Peninsula to announce their embrace of Islam, and people joined Islam in throngs. The 9th year of Hijrah, therefore, became known as the “Year of Delegations.” The number of delegations listed by the historians of expeditions were over seventy, and they continued to come until the beginning of the 10th year of Hijrah.

Following were the most important of these delegations:

First: The Delegation of Banu Thaqif

The Delegation of Banu Thaqif was the first to come to the Prophet (PBBUH) and join Islam after the Expedition of Tabuk, even though they had hesitated for a long time. The Prophet (PBBUH), as stated earlier, was asked to supplicate against Banu Thaqif after the Siege of Al-Ta`if. Instead, the Prophet (PBBUH) supplicated for their guidance, saying, **“O Allah, guide the Thaqif and bring them (to me) as Muslims.”**

ʿUrwah Ibn Masʿud Embraces Islam

ʿUrwah ibn Masʿud was one of the chiefs of Thaqif. ʿUrwah knew the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) and held him in high honor. He was one of the negotiators on behalf of the Quraysh in Al-Hudaibiyah Treaty.

He was in Yemen at the time the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) undertook the expedition to Al-Taʿif. After he returned and learned of the victory achieved at Tabuk, he hurried to Madinah and met with the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) and embraced Islam. This took place after the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) arrived from Al-Taʿif.

ʿUrwah publicly announced his entry into Islam and resolved to go back to his tribe and invite them to Islam. The Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) knew the strong passion his people had for their idols and their hard, stubborn spirit, so he (PBBUH) warned him, saying, **“They will kill you.”** ʿUrwah, too confident of his status among his people, replied, “O Messenger of Allah, I am dearer to them than their sight and their firstborn.”

ʿUrwah went away and called his people to Islam. His tribesmen gave him no reply at first. They consulted together and, in the morning, when ʿUrwah ascended to a high place to make the call for prayer, they encircled him and assailed him with arrows from all directions until they killed him.

The Prophet’s (PBBUH) foresight concerning the reaction of ʿUrwah’s people was realized.

Banu Thaqif Sends a Delegation to the Prophet (PBBUH)

ʿUrwah’s blood was not shed in vain. Several months after the murder of ʿUrwah, the tribes surrounding Thaqif embraced Islam, and the Thaqif people began to see the hideousness of their wrongdoing against one of their chiefs. It

lowered their status and affected their security in the area. Any of their tribesmen who crossed out of their region were exposed to risk.

Moreover, the Thaqif people realized that they had no power to fight all the Arabs around them who became Muslims and gave the pledge of allegiance to the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH). After consulting with one another, they approached one of their elder chiefs, `Abd Yalil ibn `Amr, to go to the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) and propose peace with them. But he refused, fearing that when he returned, they would do to him the same as they had done to `Urwah ibn Mas`ud. He said, "I will not do this unless you send men with me." They agreed and sent with him two men from Al-Ahlaf and three men from Banu Malik, making a delegation of six men. The youngest of them was `Uthman ibn Abul-`As Al-Thaqafi.

The Delegation of Banu Thaqif Negotiates with the Prophet (PBBUH)

The delegation of Banu Thaqif arrived, and the Prophet (PBBUH) had a tent pitched for them next to the mosque so that they could hear the Qur'an recited and see the Muslims pray in congregation.

Khalid ibn Sa`id ibn Al-`As was the person who acted as the mediator in the negotiations between the delegates and the Prophet (PBBUH). They would not eat any of the food that was brought to them from the Prophet (PBBUH) unless Khalid ate some of it first (to assure that it was safe); this behavior continued until they embraced Islam.

Among the conditions they asked of the Prophet (PBBUH) to enter Islam was that he should leave their idol Al-Lat undemolished for three years. The Prophet (PBBUH) refused. They persisted and asked him to leave it for two years, then one year, then one month after their return. Still, no matter how much they requested this, his refusal was decisive and final.

Their second condition was that they be exempted from prayer, which the Prophet (PBBUH) also declined, saying, **“There is no good in a religion which does not contain prayers.”** Finally, the delegation gave in and agreed to demolish Al-Lat, but they asked the Prophet (PBBUH) to exempt them from breaking their idols with their own hands, and he (PBBUH) agreed to this request.

The delegation embraced Islam and agreed to perform prayers, and the Prophet (PBBUH) ordered that a treaty be written and handed to them.

Even though he was the youngest among them, the Prophet (PBBUH) appointed `Uthman ibn Abu Al-`As to be their leader, because he was the keenest among them to study Islam and learn the Qur'an, according to the testimony of Abu Bakr.

During the rest of Ramadan, the delegation of Thaqif remained in Madinah as guests of the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH). When it was time for them to return to their people, the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) advised `Uthman ibn Abul-`As, saying, **“Be brief (when leading prayers), and measure the people by the weakest among them; for among them are the old, the small, the weak, and the needy.”**

Thaqif Embraces Islam

The people of Thaqif embraced Islam after their delegation returned to their homeland. They heard from them about their meeting with the Prophet (PBBUH) and the pact of peace they had concluded with him.

The returning delegation had in their company two men dispatched from the Prophet (PBBUH): Abu Sufyan ibn Harb and Al-Mughirah ibn Shu`bah. They were chosen for their ties of friendship and compassion for the people of Thaqif. The Prophet (PBBUH) charged them with the task of destroying Al-Lat idol, with the help of other Muslim men.

Al-Mughirah was the first to start destroying Al-Lat, then the other men joined in the task and carried on the destruction until they levelled the idol with the earth, rooted up its whole foundation, and brought out the ornaments, coverings, and wealth buried under it. They returned with these valuables to the Prophet (PBBUH). He (PBBUH) divided them on the same day and thanked Allah for giving him victory and supporting His Religion.

Second: The Delegation of Tayi'

A delegation from Tayi' arrived, headed by their chief, Zaid ibn Muhalhal ibn Zaid Al-Tay'i, known as Zaid Al-Khail (the meaning of his name was Zaid, the owner of many horses). When they came in the presence of the Prophet (PBBUH), they talked to him (PBBUH) and he offered Islam to them. They accepted it, embraced it, and became good Muslims. They agreed to demolish their idol (named Al-Fuls).

Regarding Zaid, the Prophet (PBBUH) said, **“There has not been a man among the Arabs whose merit has been described to me, who then came to me and I found that he was less (virtuous) than what he was described to me as being, except Zaid Al-Khail; I found that he was not given his due credit when described to me.”**

Instead of Zaid Al-Khail, the Prophet named him Zaid Al-Khair (Khair means goodness and bounteousness).

The Expedition Led by `Ali to Destroy Al-Fuls Idol

The Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) sent `Ali ibn Abu Talib at the head of a squadron of one hundred and fifty men to destroy Al-Fuls, the idol of Banu Tayi'.

At dawn, they raided the place of the people of Hatim Al-Tayi' – the man who was regarded as an example of munificence. The squadron destroyed Al-Fuls idol and captured a great deal of booty.

Among the captives was the daughter of Hatim Al-Tay'i. His son `Adi fled the raid and took refuge in Syria.

`Adi ibn Hatim Embraces Islam

The captives were brought to Madinah and, on meeting with the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH), the sister of `Adi ibn Hatim appealed to him to release her. He (PBBUH) granted her request and mentioned the fabulous generosity for which her father was famous among the Arabs during *Jahiliyyah* (pre-Islamic age of ignorance). He (PBBUH) ordered that she be released and acted bountifully towards her by providing her with a good provision of clothing, a mount, and expenses for her journey.

The Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) sent her with the first caravan leaving for Syria. After uniting with her brother `Adi, she related to him about the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH), saying, "He (PBBUH) did something that our father would not have done. You should go to him, whether in hope (for his kindness) or in fear. If he is a prophet, those who lead (others) to him will enjoy his grace. And if he is a king, you will not be disgraced before him, you being what you are."

`Adi was convinced by his sister's view and set out until he reached the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) in Madinah. `Adi found him in his mosque, and after greeting him and introducing himself to him, the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) got up to take him to his house.

On the way, an old feeble woman stopped the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH). They had a long talk about some needs she had. When `Adi saw this, he said to himself, "By Allah, this is not a king." They continued walking together until they entered the Prophet's (PBBUH) house.

The Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) took a leather cushion stuffed with palm leaves and threw it to `Adi, saying, "**Sit on this.**" `Adi replied, "No, rather, you

sit on it.” He (PBBUH) said, “**No, you sit on it.**” `Adi sat on it, while the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) sat on the ground. `Adi said to himself, “By Allah, this is not the way a king behaves.” When the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) proposed Islam to `Adi, he accepted it and joined the lines of the Muslims.

Third: The Christian Delegations of Najran

According to historical accounts, there were two delegations from Najran.

The First Delegation

After the occurrence of the Battle of Badr and with the spread of the news of the victory of the Muslims, the first Christian delegation of Najran arrived in Madinah. They wanted to personally see the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) and verify his prophethood. They also wanted to closely know how this new religion viewed Christ (PBBUH). They were joined in their argument with the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) by the Jews of Madinah.

At that time, following the Battle of Badr, the position of the Muslims was not strong or awe-inspiring enough to drive the delegation of Najran to ask for peace. Although the Christian delegation clearly recognized that Muhammad (PBBUH) was truly the awaited Messenger of Allah (whose coming was foretold in their scriptures), they departed to Yemen without either embracing Islam or concluding peace. The real reason behind their refusal to acknowledge Prophet Muhammad’s (PBBUH) prophethood was their strong attachment to prestige, wealth, and false titles.

On the way back to Yemen, Abu Harithah ibn `Alqamah, their most authoritative and knowledgeable priest, confessed to his companion his conviction that Muhammad (PBBUH) was the Messenger of Allah.

“If that is so,” asked his companion, “what prevents you from following him when you know this?” Abu Harithah ibn `Alqamah replied, “What prevents me

is what these people (meaning the people of Najran) have done: they have venerated us, provided us with riches, and honored us. If I did this, they would take away from us everything you see.”

The Second Delegation

A delegation of sixty men from the Najran Christians arrived in Madinah in 9 A.H. to meet the Prophet (PBBUH). The group included the most eminent and knowledgeable scholars of Najran and some of their highest noblemen. They had a long conversation with the Prophet (PBBUH), during which he (PBBUH) asked them questions and they asked him questions. When the Prophet (PBBUH) called them to Islam, they refused and asked him about the way Islam sees and describes `Isa (Jesus Christ PBBUH). In reply, he (PBBUH) recited to them Allah’s Saying: “Verily, the likeness of `Isa (Jesus) before Allah is the likeness of Adam. He created him from dust, then (He) said to him: ‘Be!’ - and he was.” (Al-`Imran 3:59)

Al-Mubalah Challenge

The Christian delegation of Najran refused the sound argument and fair preaching advanced by the Qur’an regarding Prophet `Isa (PBBUH), and so Prophet Muhammad (PBBUH) called them to *Mubalah* (two contending parties mutually invoke Allah’s Curse on the lying party). It was a practice in which two opposing groups would bring all the members of their family and beloved ones, and when everyone was present, the people of each group would ask that Allah curse the group that was lying. This is the practice that is referred to in the Qur’anic verse:

“Then whoever disputes with you concerning him (Jesus) after all this knowledge that has come to you (i.e., Jesus being a slave of Allah, and having no share in Divinity), say: ‘(O Muhammad) Come, let us call our sons and your sons, our women and your women, ourselves and yourselves – then we pray and

invoke (sincerely) the Curse of Allah upon the liars (among us).” (Al-`Imran 3:61)

The Prophet (PBBUH) returned with Fatimah, `Ali, Al-Hassan, and Al-Husain, and he said to them, “**When I supplicate** (for Allah to curse those who are lying), **say Amen.**” The delegates of Najran saw the earnestness and determination of the Prophet (PBBUH), and so they asked him (PBBUH) to give them some time until they consulted one another. They said to one another, “Do not do this (*Mubahalab*: mutual invoking of Allah’s Curse), because by Allah, if he is a prophet and we do this invocation, neither we nor our offspring after us will be successful. Not a single hair or nail of ours on the face of the earth will escape destruction.”

The Christians of Najran were proud but not ignorant; they knew that Muhammad (PBBUH) was a Messenger of Allah and that he brought them the final words regarding Jesus (PBBUH). They also knew that throughout history, whenever anyone went against a prophet in a session of *Mubahalab*, that person would be destroyed. Therefore, they refrained from going through with *Mubahalab*, and they prudently agreed to submit to the judgment of the Prophet (PBBUH) regarding them.

The next day, they came to the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) and said, “O Abul Qasim! We have decided not to conclude *Mubahalab* with you, and that you remain in your religion and we remain in ours.” The Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) agreed to sign a treaty with them in return for paying *Jizyah*, and he (PBBUH) granted them the protection of Allah and His Messenger and total freedom to practice their religion. He (PBBUH) allowed all holders of offices to remain in their positions.

A covenant containing these terms was written and handed to them.

The Trustworthy Man of this Nation

After witnessing for themselves the Prophet's (PBBUH) justice and the way his Companions emulated him, the delegates of Najran had another request to make. They asked the Prophet (PBBUH) to send with them a trustworthy man to accompany them to receive the *Jizyah* agreed on for peace and also to settle any disputes that arose between them.

So, the Prophet (PBBUH) sent with them Abu `Ubaidah ibn Al-Jarrah to receive the amount of *Jizyah* agreed on in the peace treaty and judge between them concerning any monetary disputes and issues over which they may differ.

A Last Invitation to Belief

Before the delegates started their return journey back to Najran, the Prophet (PBBUH) offered to them a last invitation to belief, through a Qur'anic revelation: "Say (O Muhammad) O people of the Scripture (Jews and Christians): Come to a word that is just between us and you, that we worship none but Allah, and that we associate no partners with Him, and that none of us shall take others as lords besides Allah. Then, if they turn away, say: 'Bear witness that we are Muslims.'" (Al-`Imran 3:64)

This Qur'anic verse provides a clear, undisputed command, which no Jew or Christian could deny. After the delegation departed to their homeland, Islam started spreading among the people of Najran. It was even mentioned that some of their chiefs embraced Islam following their return.

Fourth: The Delegation of Tamim

The Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) dispatched Bishr ibn Sufyan Al-Adawi to collect *Zakah* (obligatory charity) from Banu Ka`b, a branch of Khuza`ah. But they were prevented from paying *Zakah* by a neighboring tribe, Banu Tamim, who were inciting the various tribes to refuse to pay *Zakah*.

News of this reached the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH), so he (PBBUH) sent Uyainah ibn Hisn with a detachment of fifty Arab horsemen; none of them was from Al-Muhajirun (Emigrants from Makkah) or Al-Ansar (Supporters from Madinah). This took place in Muharram 9 A.H. Uyainah attacked them and captured some of them and brought them to Madinah.

The Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) ordered that the captives be accommodated in the house of Ramlah bint Al-Harith.

Arrival of the Delegation of Tamim

As result of this incident, a delegation from Banu Tamim came to meet the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH); included among them were some of their notables and chiefs. Banu Tamim were rough Bedouins. When the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) was late in coming out to them (as he was taking his midday nap), the heads of the delegation came around to the private room where he (PBBUH) lived and started to call the Prophet (PBBUH) by his name, shouting, “O Muhammad! Come out to us.”

The Prophet (PBBUH), disturbed by their shouting, came out to see them; he said nothing and did nothing to reprimand them. Allah (Exalted be He) revealed about them Qur’anic verses to advise the people on how they should behave in the presence of the Prophet (PBBUH): “O you who believe! Raise not your voices above the voice of the Prophet, nor speak aloud to him in talk as you speak aloud to one another, lest your deeds may be rendered fruitless while you perceive not. Verily! Those who lower their voices in the presence of the Messenger of Allah, they are the ones whose hearts Allah has tested for piety. For them is forgiveness and a great reward. Verily! Those who call you from behind the dwellings, most of them have no sense. And if they had patience till you could come out to them, it would have been better for them. And Allah is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful.” (Al-Hujurat 49:1-5)

It was the time for *Zubr* Prayer. Bilal called the Azan and the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) entered the mosque to offer prayer. When he (PBBUH) came out, the delegates clung to him and called for a poetry and boasting contest¹. “We are people from Tamim,” they said, “We have brought with us our poets and orators to compete against you in poetry and boasting (about our merits).” The Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) replied, “**Neither with poetry was I sent, nor with boasting was I commanded.**”

However, the delegates gathered around the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) and started bragging about their and their forefathers’ glory. The Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) ordered Thabit ibn Qays ibn Shimas, the spokesman and orator of Islam, to respond to them. Banu Tamim then advanced their poet to brag about their merits. When he was finished, the poet of Islam, Hassan ibn Thabit, stood and answered them.

The delegation of Banu Tamim admitted that the poets of Islam far excelled them in eloquence, and they embraced Islam. The Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) returned to them their captives and gave them gifts. They stayed in Madinah for a while to learn the Qur’an and understand Islam.

Fifth: People Enter Islam in Throngs

More than seventy delegations successively arrived in Madinah during the 9th and 10th years A.H. Among the delegations mentioned by historians and biographers were the people of Yemen, Banu Sa`d Hudhaym ibn Quda`ah, Banu `Amir ibn Qais, Banu Asad, Bahra`, Khaulan, Muharib, Banu Al-Harith ibn Ka`b, Dhi Murrah, Nakh`, and many other delegations that came forth from across the Arabian Peninsula to announce their acceptance of Islam.

Islam extended throughout the Arabian Peninsula. In the Grand Opening of Makkah, the Muslim army numbered ten thousand, and before an entire year had elapsed, thirty thousand Muslims were marching to the Expedition of

¹ A contest where each party tries to impress the other with their eloquence and accomplishments.

Tabuk. Then a sea of Muslims, amounting to a hundred thousand or more, surrounded the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) during the Farewell Hajj. They were chanting *Talbiyah*¹, *Takbir*², *Tasbih*³ and *Tahmid*⁴.

On this occasion, the Chapter of Al-Nasr (The Divine Support) was revealed, indicating this great victory: “When comes Allah’s Help (to you, O Muhammad against your enemies) and the conquest (of Makkah), and you see that the people enter Allah’s religion (Islam) in crowds, so glorify the Praises of your Lord, and ask for His Forgiveness. Verily, He is the One Who accepts the repentance and forgives.” (Al-Nasr 110:1-3)

When the Chapter of Al-Nasr was revealed, the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) said, “**My death has been announced to me.**”

¹ Devotional expressions chanted at certain times during Hajj and `Umrah.

² Saying: "*Allahu Akbar* (Allah is Greater [than everything])."

³ Saying: "*Subhan Allah* (Glory be to Allah)."

⁴ Saying: "*Alhamdu lillah* (All praise is due to Allah)."

Farewell Pilgrimage

After the completion of his mission of calling people to Allah's Path and the entry of multitudes into Allah's Religion, and the purification of the Ka`bah from idols and all forms of idolatry, a secret voice within the Prophet's (PBBUH) heart alerted him that his days in this world were coming to an end.

This was clear in the Prophet's (PBBUH) words to Mu`adh when he dispatched him to Yemen, in the 10th year A.H. **“O Mu`adh, make things easy (for people) and do not make them difficult (for them), and give glad tidings and do not repel (people). O Mu`adh, perhaps you shall not meet me after this year of mine. Perhaps, (when you return), you shall pass by this mosque of mine and my grave.”** Hearing this, Mu`adh wept, fearing to part with the Prophet (PBBUH).

The Prophet (PBBUH) Prepares His Departure for Hajj

Hajj – the major pilgrimage of Islam to Makkah – was made obligatory towards the end of the 9th year A.H. Up till that time, the Prophet (PBBUH) had performed `Umrah (minor pilgrimage) on two occasions: the compensatory `Umrah and the `Umrah from Al-Ji`ranah (when he PBBUH was heading back from the Battle of Hunain).

Other scholars maintain that the Prophet (PBBUH) had performed four `Umrahs: the first was the `Umrah of Al-Hudaibiyah, in which the Prophet (PBBUH) was barred from reaching the House and was thus not fulfilled; the second was the compensatory `Umrah; the third was the `Umrah from Al-Ji`ranah; and the last was the `Umrah which he (PBBUH) combined with his Hajj.

With the arrival of the month of Dhul-Qa`dah of the year 10 A.H., the Prophet (PBBUH) started his departure preparations for Hajj and ordered the

people to prepare themselves for it. Hajj to Allah's Sacred House in Makkah is one of the rituals of Islam for which it was vital that the Prophet (PBBUH) make himself a practical example for all Muslims.

As soon as the people heard of the Prophet's (PBBUH) intentions for going on Hajj and his call for everyone to join him, the Muslims started carrying the news to one another. Very soon it spread all over the peninsula. Indeed, what goodness and blessings can be greater than performing Hajj in the company of the Prophet (PBBUH) himself.

Thousands and thousands of Muslims from every part of the peninsula arrived and gathered in Madinah. Over a hundred thousand came in response to their Prophet's (PBBUH) call, and tents were set up around the city to accommodate these visitors. They came as brothers and sisters, knowing and appreciating one another's differences, united by the bonds of friendship and mercy.

The Muslims Proceed for Hajj

On Saturday the twenty-fifth of Dhul-Qa'dah of the year 10 A.H., the Prophet (PBBUH) set forth toward Makkah accompanied by all his wives.

The Prophet (PBBUH) moved ahead, followed by this great multitude of Muslims, after having offered the *Zuhr* (Noon) Prayer as four *Rak'abs* (units of prayer) in the mosque of Madinah. When they reached Dhul-Hulaifah, the Prophet (PBBUH), along with the Muslims accompanying him, offered the 'Asr (Afternoon) Prayer as two *Rak'abs* (in shortened form, known in Islamic terminology as *Qasr*, due to being travelers) and spent the night there.

The following morning, the Prophet (PBBUH) performed *Ghusl* (ritual bath) to put on the *Ihram* (clothing worn during the ritual state for Hajj and 'Umrah). He perfumed himself, put on his *Izar* (garment worn below the waist)

and *Rida'* (garment worn around the upper part of the body), and garlanded his sacrificial camel.

Next, the Prophet (PBBUH) offered the *Zuhr* Prayer shortened to two *Rak`ahs* and, while still at his place of prayer, he proclaimed the *Talbiyah* (devotional expressions chanted at certain times during Hajj and `Umrah) for performing Hajj combined with `Umrah.

The Prophet (PBBUH) went out, riding on his camel Al-Qaswa', with the procession of pilgrims surrounding him on every side. They were all wearing the same simple garment – two pieces of unstitched cloth, one wrapped around the waist, and the other thrown over the shoulder.

Together with all the pilgrims, the Prophet (PBBUH) started repeating *Talbiyah*, with all his heart turned to Allah (Glorified be He). “*Labbayka Allahumma labbayk, labbayka la sharika laka labbayk. Inna al-hamda wan-ni`mata laka wal-mulk, la sharika lak* (Here I am, O Allah, here I am. Here I am, You have no partner; here I am. Verily, all praise and blessings are Yours, and all sovereignty, You have no partner).”

The Prophet (PBBUH) continued his travels until he was close to his destination – Makkah. He (PBBUH) spent the night at Dhi-Tuwa and entered Makkah on Sunday morning, the 4th of Dhul-Hijjah of the year 10 A.H. after praying *Fajr*, having spent eight nights on the road from Madinah to Makkah.

The Prophet (PBBUH) Delivers the Farewell Sermon

On the eighth day of Dhul-Hijjah — the Day of Tarwiyah — the Prophet (PBBUH) left for Mina, where he stayed for the day and offered all five prayers. At daybreak on the 9th of Dhul-Hijjah, after praying *Fajr*, the Prophet (PBBUH) waited until the sun had risen and then rode Al-Qaswa', followed by all the pilgrims, to Arafat. There he (PBBUH) found a tent pitched for him at Namirah (close to Mount Arafat). He (PBBUH) stayed in the tent until the sun had passed

the meridian, then rode down to the bottom of the valley, where over a hundred thousand people gathered around him. While sitting on his she-camel, the Prophet (PBBUH) addressed the crowds of pilgrims with the well-known “Farewell Sermon.”

The Prophet (PBBUH) began his sermon by praising and extolling Allah. He (PBBUH) delivered his sermon in a strong, loud voice, and ordered Rabi`ah ibn Umayyah ibn Khalaf to loudly repeat the sermon after him, sentence by sentence, to make sure that everyone would hear it. He (PBBUH) said:

“O people, listen to my words. I do not know whether I shall ever meet you again in this place after this year of mine.

O people, your blood (i.e., your lives) and properties are inviolable to one another just as the inviolability (i.e., sacredness) of this day of yours, in this month of yours, in this city of yours.

Indeed, you will meet your Lord, and He will ask you about your deeds. I have (already) made this known. Whoever has something entrusted to his care, let him return it to the one who entrusted it to him.

Every *Riba* (usury/interest) is (now) abolished, and your capital sums are yours (to keep) without inflicting wrong (on others) or suffering wrong (yourselves). Allah has decreed that there shall be no *Riba*, and the *Riba* of Al-`Abbas ibn `Abdul-Muttalib is abolished.

Every blood revenge that was in the *Jahiliyyah* is (now) remitted (i.e., is to be left unavenged), and the first case of blood revenge that I will remit is the blood of the son of Abu Rabi`ah ibn Al-Harith ibn `Abdul-Muttalib (who was nursed among the tribe of Banu Sa`d and was killed by the Hudhail tribe).

O people, Satan has despaired of ever being worshipped in this land of yours (the Arabian Peninsula), but he covets what is less than that; he is

satisfied with those of your deeds which you regard as insignificant. Therefore, be on your guard against him regarding your religion.

O people, the postponement (of restriction within sacred months) is an increase in disbelief – by which the unbelievers are misled. They allow it one year, and forbid it another year, in order to conform to the number made sacred by Allah, thus permitting what Allah has forbidden and forbidding what Allah has permitted. Time has completed its full cycle and has returned to the state it was in when Allah created the heavens and the earth. Verily, the number of months with Allah is twelve months (in a year), of which four are sacred; three of them are consecutive: Dhul-Qa`dah, Dhul-Hijjah, Muharram, and Rajab of Mudar, which comes (singly) between the months of Jumada and Sha`ban.

O people, listen to my words and understand them. Know that every Muslim is the brother of another Muslim and that Muslims are brothers to one another. It is not lawful for a person to take something from his brother except that which his brother gives willingly and with a content heart; so, do not wrong yourselves. Have I conveyed (the message)? O Allah, bear witness. (Beware!) Do not become disbelievers after me (by) striking the necks of one another. Indeed, I have left among you that which, if you hold fast to it, you shall never go astray: the Book of Allah and the Sunnah of His Prophet.

O people, your Lord is One, and your father is one. All of you (humans) are from Adam, and Adam was (created) from dust. Verily, the noblest of you in Allah's Sight is the most God-fearing. An Arab has no superiority over a non-Arab, nor a non-Arab over an Arab; nor a white person over a black person, nor a black person over a white one except by piety."

"Have I conveyed (the message)?"

People replied from every direction, "O Yes."

The Prophet (PBBUH) said, **“O Allah bear witness,”** and repeated it three times.

The Prophet (PBBUH) concluded his speech with, **“Let those who are present inform those who are absent. And may Allah’s Peace and Mercy be upon you.”**

“Today I Have Perfected Your Religion for You”

After the Prophet (PBBUH) had completed the farewell sermon in which he (PBBUH) combined all the elements of Islam, Allah (Glorified be He) revealed His Saying, **“This day, I have perfected your religion for you, completed My Favor upon you, and have chosen for you Islam as your religion.”** (Al-Ma’idah 5:3)

Hearing this Qur’anic verse, `Umar cried. The Prophet (PBBUH) asked him what caused him to cry. `Umar replied, **“I cried because we were increasing in our religion. Now it is completed; there is nothing that is completed that does not begin to decrease.”**

The Prophet (PBBUH) said, **“You speak the truth.”**

It was narrated that a Jew came to `Umar during the time of his caliphate and said to him, **“O Emir of the believers, you recite a verse in your book which, if it had been revealed to us (the Jews), we would have taken that day as a feast.”**

`Umar asked, **“Which verse?”** The Jew replied, **“This day, I have perfected your religion for you, completed My Favor upon you, and have chosen for you Islam as your religion.”** (Al-Ma’idah 5:3)

`Umar said, **“By Allah, I know the day on which it was sent down upon the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) and the hour at which it was sent down upon him. It was on the evening of (the Day of) `Arafah on a Friday, and both of them are feast days for us.”**

The Prophet Completes the Rituals of Hajj

The sermon ended. Bilal called the Azan, and the Prophet (PBBUH) led the people in both *Zuhr* and *Asr* Prayers, combined and shortened to two *Rak`abs* (units of prayer). He (PBBUH) then mounted his she-camel A-Qaswa' and rode to Mount `Arafat, where he (PBBUH) spent the afternoon in supplication until the sun set.

The Prophet (PBBUH) left `Arafat and headed to Muzdalifah, where he prayed both the *Maghrib* (Sunset) and *Isba'* (Night) Prayers, with one Azan and two *Iqamahs* (call to start the prayer).

The Prophet (PBBUH) lay down until it was dawn. It was the tenth of Dhul-Hijjah, the Day of *Nabr*, when pilgrims slaughter their sacrificial animals. Having offered *Fajr* Prayer, he (PBBUH) mounted Al-Qaswa' and headed towards *Al-Mash`ar Al-Haram* (Sacred Monument at Muzdalifah). Once there, he (PBBUH) faced towards the *Qiblah* and began to supplicate and glorify Allah. He (PBBUH) kept standing there until it was clear daylight.

The Prophet (PBBUH) then went to *Jamrat-ul-`Aqabah* (the closest pebble-throwing area to Makkah) and pelted it with seven pebbles. Next, he (PBBUH) went to the place of slaughtering sacrifices, where he sacrificed sixty-three camels by his own hands and gave `Ali the remaining thirty-seven camels to sacrifice, thus completing the total sacrificing figure of one hundred.

After the Prophet (PBBUH) had had his head shaved and applied musk, he rode his camel to Makkah to perform *Tawaf-ul-Ifadah* (final obligatory circumambulation of the Ka`bah in Hajj). Then he (PBBUH) returned to Mina, where he (PBBUH) stayed for the three days of *Tashriq* (11th, 12th and 13th of Dhul-Hijjah). Each day, he (PBBUH) stoned all three *Jamarat* (stone pillars marking the pebble-throwing areas) after sunset, starting with the smallest one, *Al-Jamrah Al-Sughra* (first or smallest pebble-throwing area), and then proceeding

to the middle and large ones. The Prophet (PBBUH) said, “*Allahu Akbar* (Allah is Greater [than everything])” with each pebble he threw at the three *Jamarat*.

On the third day of *Tashriq*, the 13th of Dhul-Hijjah, the Prophet (PBBUH) rode his camel to the Sacred House and performed the Farewell Tawaf. The Farewell Tawaf was the final act of the Prophet’s (PBBUH) Hajj. Upon its completion, he (PBBUH) departed from Makkah and began his homeward journey to Madinah.

The Prophet (PBBUH) thus completed his pilgrimage. Some scholars named it *Hajjatul-Wada`* (Farewell Pilgrimage). Others named it *Hajjatul-Balagh* (the pilgrimage of Conveying the Message), while others named it *Hajjatul-Islam* (the pilgrimage of Islam).

In truth, the Prophet’s (PBBUH) pilgrimage was all these. It was the “Farewell Pilgrimage” because the Prophet (PBBUH) saw Makkah and the Sacred House for the last time. It was also the “Pilgrimage of Islam” because Allah (Exalted be He) completed His religion for the welfare of humankind and perfected His Blessings upon them. Finally, it was also the “Pilgrimage of Conveying the Message” because the Prophet (PBBUH) completed his mission of conveying the divine message to humanity.

The Last Expedition under the Command of Usamah ibn Zaid

The Farewell Hajj was finished; it was time for the tens of thousands of pilgrims who had accompanied the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) to leave for their homelands. The people of Najd to Najd, the people of Tihamah to Tihamah, the people of Yemen and Hadhramut to the southern and adjacent regions of the Peninsula, and the Prophet (PBBUH) and his Companions to Madinah.

The Muslims stayed peacefully in Madinah, secure from any danger or risk from the entire Arabian Peninsula – the southern, eastern, and western parts.

Any concerns were primarily related to the northern part, where the Byzantine Empire was situated.

The Byzantine Empire did not accept the presence of a strong state on its borders, and because of their immense power, the Byzantines were proud and haughty. The Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) always regarded them as a force to be reckoned with and a potential danger to the Muslim state. He (PBBUH) sought to consolidate the authority of the Muslims on the Levantine borders, and for this reason the Battle of Mu'tah occurred, followed by the Battle of Tabuk; they both operated in the same direction.

Then, due to the increasing boldness and arrogance of the Byzantines, the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) started mobilizing a great army in Safar of the 11th year of Hijrah to confront the Byzantines. He (PBBUH) placed it under the command of Usamah ibn Zaid ibn Harithah, a youth of no more than seventeen years of age.

His young age and the many senior Companions, such as Abu Bakr, `Umar, Sa`d, and Abu `Ubaidah, in the army led Usamah's leadership to be subject to criticism. However, the disagreement expressed by some was put aside due to the absolute trust they had in the choice of the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH). He (PBBUH) wanted to appoint Usamah to the same position that was granted to his father, Zaid, who was martyred in the Battle of Mu'tah.

The Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) ordered Usamah to take his cavalry into the borders of Al-Balqa' and Al-Darum in Palestine, close to Mu'tah, where his father was martyred.

Usamah set out with the army and camped in a place close to Madinah called Al-Jurf, in preparation for traveling to Palestine. In the meantime, the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) became sick. His state kept getting worse and brought the advancement of the expedition to a halt. Allah willed that Usamah's commission be the first expedition executed during the caliphate of Abu Bakr.

The Last Chapter in the Prophet's (PBBUH) Good Life

Prelude to Saying Farewell to This Life

For everything there is an appointed time; every soul has a decreed time for death. Allah (Glorified be He) granted a perfect victory to His Messenger Muhammad (PBBUH) and people entered Allah's Religion in throngs.

The mission of calling people to Islam was completed; and with the prevalence of Islam over the entire peninsula, the preludes to the Prophet (PBBUH) saying farewell to this life started manifesting themselves in his feelings, expressions, and actions, as seen in the following examples:

1. The Prophet (PBBUH) used to perform *I`tikaf* (seclusion for worship in a mosque) for ten days every year in the month of Ramadan. In the year of his death, he (PBBUH) stayed in *I`tikaf* for twenty days. He (PBBUH) and Angel Jibril (PBUH) also met twice to recite to each other the Qur'an, while in previous years they used to have these meetings once a year, during every night of Ramadan.
2. During the Farewell sermon, the Prophet (PBBUH) said, **“O people, listen to my words. I do not know whether I shall ever meet you again in this place after this year of mine.”**
3. When the Chapter of Al-Nasr was revealed to the Prophet (PBBUH), he (PBBUH) said, **“My death has been announced to me.”**
4. Upon the revelation of the following Qur'anic verse: **“This day, I have perfected your religion for you, completed My Favor upon you, and have chosen for you Islam as your religion,”** (Al-Ma'idah 5:3) `Umar cried and

said, “There is nothing that is completed that does not begin to decrease.”
The Prophet (PBBUH) said to him, **“You speak the truth.”**

The Prophet Pays a Visit to the People of Baqi`

At the end of the 11th year of Hijrah, the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) went out without being accompanied by anyone except his freed slave Abu Muwayhibah. He (PBBUH) said to him, **“I have been ordered to seek forgiveness for the (dead) inhabitants of Al-Baqi` (cemetery), so come with me.”**

While standing among the graves, the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) spoke to its inhabitants, saying, **“Peace be upon you, O people of the graves! You have preceded us, and we shall join you. Rejoice, for your status is better than that of the living. Trials have come like pieces of a pitch-dark night. The last of them following the first of them, and the last of them more evil than the first.”**

“I Have Chosen Meeting My Lord”

The Prophet (PBBUH) turned to Abu Muwayhibah when it was time for him to leave, after having sought forgiveness for the people of Al-Baqi` cemetery, and said to him, **“O Abu Muwayhibah, I have been given the keys of the treasures of this world, eternal life in it, then Paradise. I have been given the choice between that and meeting my Lord and Paradise.”**

Abu Muwayhibah said, “Let my father and mother be sacrificed for you! Take the keys of the treasures of this world, eternal life in it, then Paradise.” The Prophet (PBBUH) said, **“No, O Abu Muwayhibah, I have indeed chosen meeting my Lord and Paradise.”**

The Prophet (PBBUH) Begins to Fall Sick

In the early morning of the same day, the Prophet (PBBUH) began to fall ill with the sickness that would be his last. He (PBBUH) felt a severe headache and his body hot with fever. People were afraid for the Prophet's (PBBUH) life, and the army, under the command of Usamah ibn Zayd, remained stationed and did not set out on its expedition.

The Companions had every right to feel concerned and worried. The Prophet (PBBUH) had lived his life among them firm as a mountain, unshaken by hardships, unmoved by disasters. He (PBBUH) had emigrated in the most critical and dangerous circumstances. During the different battles, he (PBBUH) had passed through several difficult situations that would turn children white-haired.

During the Battle of Uhud, the Prophet (PBBUH) put himself in harm's way to save his trapped army. The Muslims were surrounded and attacked on two fronts and started fleeing. The Prophet (PBBUH) courageously tried to rally his army and, during his endeavors, he (PBBUH) was rushed at and attacked from all directions by the disbelievers. He (PBBUH) sustained multiple injuries, including the breaking of his front teeth.

The Battle of Hunain was no less intense. In the dark of predawn, the enemy ambushed the Muslim army in a surprise attack, and the various tribes composing the Muslim army started retreating and fleeing from the enemy. The Prophet (PBBUH) remained steadfast, immovable, holding firmly to his position at the rear of the army. He (PBBUH) began calling out to his army, **“O people! Come to me. I am the Messenger of Allah! I am Muhammad ibn `Abdullah,”** until the various divisions of the Muslim army began to successively return to the battlefield.

Therefore, the Companions had every right to feel alarmed and to postpone setting out from their encampment at Al-Jurf, waiting to be assured of the Prophet's (PBBUH) health.

Despite Illness, the Prophet (PBBUH) Jokes with His Wife `Aishah

Upon returning from Al-Baqi`, the Prophet (PBBUH) found his wife `Aishah suffering from a headache. She was saying, "O my head." The Prophet (PBBUH) said to her, "**Rather it is me, by Allah, O `Aishah, (who should say): O my head.**"

The pain was not yet strong enough to put the Prophet (PBBUH) to bed, so when `Aishah repeated her complaint about her headache, he (PBBUH) jokingly said to her, "**What harm would be upon you if you were to die before me, and (then) I took care of you, shrouded you, prayed (funeral prayer) over you, and buried you?**" She replied, "By Allah, it seems to me that having done that you would return to my house to spend a conjugal night with one of your wives." The Prophet (PBBUH) just smiled at what she said, and then his pain and fever intensified.

Despite the Pain, the Prophet (PBBUH) Visits the Houses of His Wives

Once the pain had calmed, the Prophet (PBBUH) went to visit his wives one by one, as he (PBBUH) always used to do. It was as if he (PBBUH) was bidding them all a farewell. He (PBBUH) was in pain and became overwhelmed by it while he (PBBUH) was visiting the house of his wife Lady Maymunah.

The Prophet (PBBUH) summoned all his wives to him there and asked their permission to be nursed in the house of Lady `Aishah, and they agreed. He (PBBUH) stepped out, his head wrapped (because of his head pain). Barely able to walk, he (PBBUH) was supported on one side by `Ali ibn Abu Talib and on

the other by Al-Fadl ibn Al-`Abbas, until he entered the house of Lady `Aishah to spend his last days.

The Fever Worseness and the Prophet (PBBUH) Walks Out to the Mosque

Although the Prophet's (PBBUH) fever had started to worsen, it did not prevent him from going out to the mosque, helped by one of his relatives, to lead the people in prayers. This continued to be his condition for several days – only leading the prayers and not capable of talking to or listening to his Companions. However, fragments of people's talk and objection about assigning the command of the army to Usamah ibn Zaid ibn Harithah reached him. "He (PBBUH) has assigned a junior boy in command of the senior Muhajirun and Ansar," people said.

Despite the severity of his illness and his high fever, the Prophet (PBBUH) felt that it was necessary to address the people on the subject of Usamah's command of the coming expedition.

The Prophet (PBBUH) said to his family members, **"Pour over me seven water skins from different wells so that I may go out to the people and exhort them."** So they made him sit in a tub and poured water over him until he (PBBUH) said, "Enough! Enough!"

The Prophet (PBBUH) felt relieved after this. He (PBBUH) put on his clothes, wrapped his head, went to the mosque, and sat on the first step of the pulpit.

The Prophet's (PBBUH) Last Address to the People

The Prophet (PBBUH) praised and extolled Allah and said, **"O people, dispatch Usamah's expedition. By my life, if you are criticizing his**

leadership, you criticized the leadership of his father before him. He is indeed worthy of leadership, just as his father was.”

The Prophet (PBBUH) resumed his address, saying, **“O Muhajirun (Emigrants from Makkah)! I entrust you to treat the Ansar (Supporters from Madinah) kindly. People increase while the Ansar remain as they are without increasing. They were my confidants with whom I took shelter. So do good to those of them who do good and forgive those of them who commit mistakes.”**

The Prophet (PBBUH) fell silent, then resumed his address, saying, **“I long to see my brothers.”** Those listening asked, “Are we not your brothers, O Messenger of Allah?” He (PBBUH) replied, **“You are my Companions. My brothers are people who will come after me. They will believe in me although they have never seen me. By Allah, I long to see them.”**

Again, the Prophet (PBBUH) fell silent for a moment, during which a profound silence prevailed over all the people. He (PBBUH) then resumed his address, saying, **“There is a slave to whom Allah has given the choice between the splendor of this world and what is with Him, and he chose what is with his Lord.”**

The Prophet (PBBUH) fell silent once again, and the people were motionless, attentive to the utmost, as if birds were perched upon their heads. Except Abu Bakr. He realized that the Prophet (PBBUH) was referring himself. He could not hold back his tears and began to cry. His feelings were very fragile and the friendship that bonded him to the Prophet (PBBUH) was deep. He said, “We sacrifice our fathers, our mothers, our souls, and our properties for you, O Messenger of Allah.”

The Companions were surprised at the reaction of Abu Bakr. Some of them said, “Look at this old man! The Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) is informing us about a servant whom Allah has given the choice between the splendor of this world and what is with Him, and he says, ‘We sacrifice our fathers and our

mothers for you, O Messenger of Allah.” Later, people learned that the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) was the person given the choice, and that Abu Bakr was the most discerning of them.

The Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) responded to Abu Bakr’s profound tears by saying, **“Take it easy, O Abu Bakr.”** Then he (PBBUH) commanded that all doors opening to the mosque be closed, except the door leading to Abu Bakr’s house. Once the doors were closed, he (PBBUH) said, **“Anyone who has done me a favor I have repaid them, except for Abu Bakr. He has done me good deeds for which Allah will reward him on the Day of Resurrection. The wealth of no one has benefited me as much as the wealth of Abu Bakr. And if I were to take a *Khalil* (close friend), I would have taken Abu Bakr. For indeed, your companion (meaning himself) is the *Khalil* of Allah.”**

The Last Days of the Prophet’s (PBBUH) Life

The Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) entered the house of `Aishah exhausted by the effort he had exerted during the day. That night, his sickness grew more severe and prevented him from going out to the mosque to lead the prayers. He (PBBUH) then lost consciousness. He (PBBUH) woke up to learn that the people had not yet prayed; they were waiting for him to come out. He (PBBUH) said, **“Tell Abu Bakr to lead the people in prayer.”**

Lady `Aishah feared that people might regard her father, Abu Bakr, as a bad omen. She was also keen for the Prophet (PBBUH) to continue to lead the prayers as a sign of his health and strength. So she replied, “Abu Bakr is a tender-hearted man (i.e., he might not bear the idea of taking your place). His voice is weak. He weeps a lot when he reads the Qur’an.” Yet the Prophet (PBBUH) repeated his command regarding Abu Bakr, and when Lady `Aishah repeated the same reply, he (PBBUH) (became impatient and) said, **“Verily, you are like the female companions of Yusuf (Prophet Joseph PBBUH). Tell Abu Bakr to lead the people in prayer.”**

Abu Bakr led the people during those last remaining days; seventeen prayers in all. During them, the Prophet's (PBBUH) health was deteriorating, and his family members were nursing him and taking care of him. Lady `Aishah would recite the Qur'an in his palm and wipe his hand over his face, while saying, "Your palm is better than mine."

The Events that Occurred a Day before the Prophet's (PBBUH) Death: On Sunday 11th of Rabi` Al-Awwal 11 A.H.

The Prophet (PBBUH) Talks with His Daughter Fatimah

Lady Fatimah, the Prophet's (PBBUH) daughter and the last remaining of his children, used to visit him daily. The Prophet (PBBUH) had a great love for her. Whenever she came to see him, he (PBBUH) would stand for her, take her by the hand, kiss her, and seat her in his place, next to him.

This time when she visited him, he (PBBUH) could not stand for her as he usually did because of his serious condition. Seeing that her father could not stand for her as was his habit during her visits, Lady Fatimah said, "How distressed is my father!" He (PBBUH) replied, "**There will be no distress upon your father after today.**"

Having her sitting by his side, the Prophet (PBBUH) whispered something to her, at which she cried bitterly. He (PBBUH) then whispered something else to her again, at which she laughed. Lady `Aishah asked her the reason behind her crying and laughing, and she replied, "I cannot disclose the secret of the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH)." When the Prophet (PBBUH) passed away, Lady `Aishah asked her the same question again and she replied, "First, he (PBBUH) informed me that he will die from this illness, so I cried. After that, he (PBBUH) told me that I will be the first to join him from his family, so I laughed."

Lady Fatimah died six months after the Prophet (PBBUH).

The Prophet (PBBUH) Gives Away Everything He Possesses to Charity

The Prophet (PBBUH) had seven dinars in his house at the beginning of the worsening of his sickness. He (PBBUH) did not want to die while still having them in his possession. He (PBBUH) commanded his family to give them away in charity to the poor. His family remained preoccupied with nursing him and constantly looking after him and forgot about fulfilling his order regarding the charity.

When the Prophet (PBBUH) regained consciousness on the Sunday that preceded his death, he (PBBUH) asked `Aishah about the seven dinars, and whether she had disturbed them as he (PBBUH) had asked of her. `Aishah replied, "By Allah, I have not. I was preoccupied with your pain." He (PBBUH) asked her to bring them and, holding them in his hand, said, **"What would the Prophet of Allah think (expect of his Lord) if he were to meet Allah (Exalted be He) while he has these?"** On that day, he (PBBUH) gave the seven dinars as charity to the poor and needy and granted his weapons to the Muslims.

The Last Day in the Prophet's (PBBUH) Life: Monday 12th of Rabi` Al-Awwal 11 A.H.

The Prophet (PBBUH) Goes Out for Prayer

The Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) had a peaceful and tranquil night after his fever subsided. When it was time for *Fajr* (Dawn) Prayer, the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) drew the curtain of `Aishah's room (which adjoined the mosque) to look at the people in prayer. He (PBBUH) smiled, tied his turban around his head, and went out to the mosque.

While praying, the Muslims saw the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) come into the mosque. They were so overjoyed by his presence that they almost interrupted their prayer to make a gap for him to pass. The Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) was extremely content with what he (PBBUH) saw and signaled them to continue.

Abu Bakr felt what was going on in the mosque and knew that people would not be diverted from prayer except by the showing up of the Prophet (PBBUH). Abu Bakr spontaneously moved backwards a little from the position of leadership of prayer so that the Prophet (PBBUH) could take over leading the prayer. The Prophet (PBBUH) pushed Abu Bakr back in his place, wanting him to continue to lead the prayer. The Prophet (PBBUH) then sat beside Abu Bakr and prayed to his right in a sitting position.

The Joy of the Muslims at Seeing the Prophet (PBBUH)

The Prophet (PBBUH) finished the prayer and faced the congregation, talking to them with a clear voice, audible even to those outside the mosque. The Muslims greatly rejoiced at the signs of recovery that appeared on the Prophet (PBBUH). Abu Bakr even came forward and said, "O Prophet of Allah, I see that you have become better by the grace and bounty of Allah as we wish for you."

Abu Bakr then asked his permission to go and visit his family, and the Prophet (PBBUH) allowed him to do so.

With happiness and relief, everyone dispersed and went about their own business.

With the Highest Companion in Paradise

The Prophet's (PBBUH) last visit to the mosque occurred during the interval of wakefulness that precedes death. He (PBBUH) entered his house, and when the forenoon grew hot, the pangs of death intensified. Lady `Aishah took hold of the Prophet (PBBUH) and leant him against her, resting his head between her chest and neck.

Her brother `Abdul-Rahman ibn Abu Bakr came in holding a *Siwak* (teeth-cleaning arak stick) in his hand. Lady `Aishah noticed that the Prophet (PBBUH) was looking at it, and she asked him, "Shall I take it for you?" The Prophet (PBBUH) nodded his head in approval. Lady `Aishah took it from her brother and chewed it to soften it, and then gave it to the Prophet (PBBUH). He (PBBUH) rubbed his teeth with it as excellently as he could.

When the pangs of death became stronger, the Prophet (PBBUH) turned to Allah (Exalted be He) in supplication, saying, "**There is no god but Allah. Death has its agonies. O Allah, help me with (i.e., patiently endure) the agonies of death. If there is pain, make it my portion and make it easy for my followers.**" Then he (PBBUH) went on, saying, "**Nay, the Most Exalted Companion in Paradise.**" It seemed that Jibril (Gabriel PBUH) came to give him a choice between sovereignty and eternity in this world and meeting the Honorable Face of his Lord and the Most Exalted Companion in Paradise, to which the Prophet (PBBUH) gave the answer that Lady `Aishah heard him saying.

With his hand raised and extended, the Prophet (PBBUH) kept repeating this same answer, **“Nay, the Most Exalted Companion in Paradise,”** until his soul was taken. Lady `Aishah said, “You were given the choice and you have chosen, by Him Who has sent you with the truth.”

The Prophet’s (PBBUH) hand inclined downwards, and his soul was taken to the Most Exalted Companion. His death took place on Monday 12 Rabi` Al-Awwal 11 A.H. at the age of 63 years and four days – more than 61 solar years.

The Muslims React with Shock at the News of the Prophet’s (PBBUH) Death

The Prophet (PBBUH) died in Lady `Aishah’s room. She laid his head down on a pillow and joined the other women in the house. Soon the sorrowful news of his death spread, and the corners of the city became darkened for its people. The news was catastrophic for the Companions who listened to him and believed in him and in the guidance with which Allah (Glorified be He) sent him.

Indeed, they cannot be blamed for the difficult emotional state they experienced upon losing the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH). They were used to seeing him morning and evening each day. They were used to hearing him, meeting him, shaking hands with him, and sitting with him. Divine revelations descended upon him while they were gathered around him. They would miss all this. Their calamity was therefore great and profound.

Following are some of the different emotions and reactions of some of the Companions regarding the Prophet’s (PBBUH) death:

The Reaction of `Umar ibn Al-Khattab

Upon hearing of the Prophet’s (PBBUH) death and hardly believing it, `Umar hurried to the Prophet’s (PBBUH) house. Having uncovered his face, he found him motionless and thought that he (PBBUH) had just passed into a state

of unconsciousness from which he would awaken. `Umar then went out to the mosque while declaring at the top of his voice, “Some hypocrites are claiming that the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) has died. By Allah, he has not died. He has gone to his Lord just as Musa ibn `Imran (Moses son of Amram PBBUH) went (to his Lord). He absented himself from his people for forty nights then returned to them after it was said that he was dead. By Allah, the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) shall return just as Musa (PBBUH) returned. Any men who spread such a false rumor that he (PBBUH) is dead shall have their arms and legs cut off.”

`Umar went on stating some facts with which he tried to pacify himself. The people heard his words and divided into believers, those who wanted to believe, and those who accepted the fait accompli. Regardless, all of them were stunned by the news.

The Reaction of Abu Bakr

While people were split between believing and not believing `Umar, Abu Bakr returned from the district of Al-Sunh in Madinah immediately upon being informed of the distressing news. A long history joined Abu Bakr with the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH). He was his life-long friend. He was the first to believe in him and was his cave companion. They never parted from each other.

Abu Bakr entered the mosque and saw the Muslims being spoken to by `Umar. He did not stop or give his attention elsewhere other than going to see the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH). He went straight to Lady `Aishah's house. He asked permission to enter and was permitted, acting upon Allah's Saying, “O you who believe! Enter not the Prophet's houses, except when leave is given to you.” (Al-Ahzab 33:53)

When Abu Bakr entered, he found the Prophet (PBBUH) lying in a corner of the house, covered with his own mantle. He approached, uncovered his face, leaned down and kissed it, and while crying, said, “How good you are living and

how good you are dead. May my father and mother be sacrificed for you. As for the death that was decreed for you, you have tasted it, and you will never experience death again.”

Abu Bakr covered the Prophet’s (PBBUH) face with the mantle and left. He went out to the people who were gathered listening to `Umar in the mosque. `Umar was still proclaiming to them that the Prophet (PBBUH) had not died. Abu Bakr asked `Umar to stop, saying to him, “Calm down, O `Umar! Listen.” But `Umar continued talking and refused to be silent.

Besides the tenderheartedness of Abu Bakr and the profound friendship that united him and the Prophet (PBBUH), Allah (Exalted be He) endowed him with great inner strength and self-composure. He maintained both during this difficult time so that Islam would not collapse with the death of the Prophet (PBBUH).

Abu Bakr rose and started addressing the gathering of people. When he started speaking to them, they left `Umar and drew close to him.

Abu Bakr praised Allah, extolled Him, and then said, “O people, whoever used to worship Muhammad, indeed Muhammad has died. And whoever worships Allah, indeed Allah is alive and shall never die.” He then recited Allah’s Saying, “Muhammad is no more than a Messenger, and indeed (many) Messengers have passed away before him. If he dies or is killed, will you then turn back on your heels (as disbelievers)? And he who turns back on his heels, not the least harm will he do to Allah, and Allah will give reward to those who are grateful.” (Al-`Imran 3:144)

No sooner did `Umar hear Abu Bakr reciting this Qur’anic verse than he fell to the ground, his legs no longer able to carry him. He knew for certain that the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) had died. The same happened to those who had believed his claim. It was as if they were hearing this Qur’anic verse for the first time.

The Reaction of `Ali ibn Abu Talib

When `Ali ibn Abu Talib heard the news of the Prophet's (PBBUH) death, he fell to the ground, his legs unable to carry him.

The Reaction of `Uthman ibn `Affan

`Uthman lost consciousness and remained in shock for several months after the death the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH).

The Reaction of Bilal

Bilal announced the Azan for the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) all his life. The Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) loved his voice. Many times he (PBBUH) said to him, **“Relieve us with it (call to prayer), O Bilal!”** After the death of the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH), the time for prayer came and Bilal stood to call out the Azan. The Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) was still lying shrouded and not yet buried. Once Bilal reached the part stating, **“I testify that Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah,”** his tears smothered any attempt to speak and his voice seized in his throat. The Muslims present for prayer burst into sobs, and tears streamed down their faces.

Bilal called out the Azan for three days after the death of the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH). Each time he reached the part stating, **“I testify that Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah,”** he cried and made the people cry. He then asked Abu Bakr, the Caliph of the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH), to exempt him from calling the Azan, after it became an unbearable task for him. He could not rise to announce the Azan and then go to prayer and not find him there.

Bilal could no longer stay in Madinah after it became empty of the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH). He left Madinah and set out with the strivers for the Levant.

Where Was the Prophet (PBBUH) Buried?

The Muslims disagreed about where they should bury the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH). A group from Al-Muhajirun said that he should be buried in Makkah, his native town, among his people. Others said that he should be buried in Jerusalem, where the prophets before him were buried. Others said that he should be buried in his mosque, where he (PBBUH) delivered sermons and exhortations and led people in prayer. Others said that he (PBBUH) should be buried in the spot of ground where the pulpit stood, or next to it.

Abu Bakr settled the issue by declaring that he heard the Messenger of Allah say, “**Any prophet who died was buried where he died.**” With this decisive verdict, it was unanimously agreed to dig for him a grave in the very place of the bed on which he (PBBUH) had died.

Washing the Prophet (PBBUH) and Saying Farewell to His Pure Body

The Prophet’s (PBBUH) body was washed by his closest relatives: `Ali ibn Abu Talib, Al-`Abbas ibn `Abdul-Muttalib, and his two sons, Al-Fadl and Qutham, Usamah ibn Zaid, and Shuqran, the freed slave of the Prophet (PBBUH). The Prophet (PBBUH) was washed while he was wearing his shirt. They poured water over his garment and did not take it off. While washing him, they smelled a sweet scent, and `Ali was heard continually saying, “How good you are both living and dead.”

After the washing of his body with his garment on was completed, the Prophet (PBBUH) was shrouded in three white cloths. Once his body was prepared for burial, it was left in its place and the doors were opened on the mosque side for the Muslims to enter and perform the funeral prayer over their Prophet (PBBUH). They were admitted inside the room in groups of ten. Everyone prayed individually without being led in the funeral prayer by an *Imam* (leader of congregational prayer). The Prophet’s (PBBUH) family members

prayed over him first. Next was Al-Muhajirun, then Al-Ansar, then the women, and finally the children.

When the funeral prayer was over, the throngs of Muslims stood with sorrowful hearts as the pure body of the Prophet (PBBUH) was carried and buried, surrounded by the angels. At their head was Angel Jibril (PBUH). Everyone asked Allah (Exalted be He) to confer blessings and peace upon him.

Prophetic Traits

Allah (Glorified be He) bestowed upon our Prophet Muhammad (PBBUH) the beauty of appearance and the perfection of manners, which no description can equal. Following are some brief outlines of his merits and characteristics to provide encouragement and a model for us to follow:

Beauty of Appearance: The Prophet's (PBBUH) Description According to Authentic Reports:

Description of the Prophet's (PBBUH) Stature

The Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) was neither tall nor short; he (PBBUH) was of average height.

Description of the Prophet's (PBBUH) Skin Color

His skin was rosy, neither glaringly white nor brown. He (PBBUH) was, as we usually say, wheaten colored.

Description of the Prophet's (PBBUH) Face

Nothing looked more beautiful than the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH). His face glowed as if the sun shone on his face. When he (PBBUH) talked, light was seen coming out from between his teeth. And when he (PBBUH) smiled, the light of his face shined around him. According to another description: His face glittered as the full moon on a moonlit night. He (PBBUH) had a broad forehead, a thick beard, and evenly spaced teeth.

According to the description given by `Ali ibn Abu Talib: His face was round. He (PBBUH) inspired awe in the heart of anyone who saw him for the first time, and love in the heart of anyone who associated with him.

Description of the Prophet's (PBBUH) Hair

His hair was neither very curly nor very straight, and it reached down to the lobes of his ears.

Description of the Prophet's (PBBUH) Shoulders and the Seal of Prophethood

He (PBBUH) was broad-shouldered and had the seal of prophethood between his two shoulder blades, resembling the egg of a pigeon.

Description of Prophet's (PBBUH) Palms and Good Scent

Anas ibn Malik described him by saying, "I never touched brocade or silk softer than the palm of the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH), and I never smelt ambergris or musk more fragrant than the body of the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH)."

The Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) shook hands with those who shook hands with him, and a fragrance emitted from his hand as if it was just being drawn out of the vessel of a perfumer. The fragrance remained for a day in the hands of those who shook his hand. Whenever he (PBBUH) passed on a road, people would know that he (PBBUH) passed on this road because of his beautiful scent.

Beauty of the Prophet's (PBBUH) Manners

He (PBBUH) had the most perfect manners ever seen in anybody. His Lord refined him with the best of good manners, and educated him, and He (the

Glorious and Majestic) perfected his education. Regarding the continuous process of education and refinement, Allah (the Most Exalted) says:

“Show forgiveness, enjoin what is good, and turn away from the foolish.” (Al-A`raf 7:199)

“And be kind and humble to the believers who follow you.” (Al-Shu`ara’ 26:215)

“The good deed and the evil deed cannot be equal. Repel (the evil) with one which is better, then verily! he, between whom and you there was enmity, (will become) as though he was a close friend.” (Fussilat 41:34)

“And let not your hand be tied (like a miser) to your neck, nor stretch it forth to its utmost reach (like a spendthrift), so that you become blameworthy and in severe poverty.” (Al-Isra’ 17:29)

After bestowing on the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) such a divine education, Allah described him with the best description ever given to a servant of Allah: “And verily, you (O Muhammad) have an exalted standard of character.” (Al-Qalam 68:4)

Lady `Aishah was asked about the manners of the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH). She replied, “His manners were those of the Qur’an.” He (PBBUH) was depicted as a Qur’an walking on earth.

The Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) described himself by saying, “**I was sent to perfect noble manners.**”

The following are some examples of his noble manners:

1. The Prophet's (PBBUH) Speech and Eloquence

The Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) observed long silence, talked but little, and listened more than he talked. When he (PBBUH) talked, he spoke the truth. His talk was easy and lenient.

The Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) was characterized by eloquence and fluency. His speech was concise yet comprehensive and contained superb wisdom. He (PBBUH) invited people to the truth and provided insight. He (PBBUH) had excellent knowledge of the different dialects of the Arabs. He (PBBUH) spoke to every tribe in their dialect. He (PBBUH) made a statement about himself, saying, **“I have been given *Jawami` Al-Kalim* (the most concise expressions carrying the widest meanings).”**

When `Umar asked him, “O Messenger of Allah, how is it that you are the most eloquent of us (although you have not lived away from us)?” He (PBBUH) replied, **“The language of Isma`il (Prophet Ishmael PBBUH) had died out. Jibril came to me with it and taught it to me.”**

Thus, the Prophet's (PBBUH) knowledge and eloquence was not something he (PBBUH) gained through human teaching; rather, his knowledge was directly gained from Allah (Glorified be He).

The following are some examples of the Prophet's (PBBUH) concise yet comprehensive sayings:

“O people! Beware of the green grass (growing) in a waste site.” Someone asked, “O Messenger of Allah! And what is the green grass in a waste site?” He (PBBUH) replied, **“A beautiful woman in an evil environment.”**

“A believer is not stung from the same hole twice.”

“People are (equal) like the teeth of a comb.”

“People are like metals (of various natures and origins), like gold and silver.”

“This world is the prison of a believer and the paradise of a disbeliever.”

“You (people) cannot satisfy them with your wealth, but you can satisfy them with your cheerful faces and good morals.”

“This religion is strong, so go deeply into it gently.”

“A believer is the mirror of his brother.”

“What is little and sufficient is better than what is much and distracting.”

“Part of the excellence of a person’s Islam is to keep away from what does not concern him.”

“Anyone who believes in Allah and the Last Day, let him speak good or remain silent.”

“The upper hand is better than the lower hand (i.e., the spending hand is better than the receiving hand).”

The examples are numerous and cannot all be mentioned here. As is obvious from them, each statement is made up of few words but carries a lot of meaningful thoughts and messages.

2. The Prophet’s (PBBUH) *Zuhd* (Detachment from the World)

The Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) did not care about the charms and attractions of this world.

The following are some examples of his renunciation of worldly charms.

“Even if They Place the Sun in My Right Hand and the Moon in My Left”

When the *Mushrikin* proposed to the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) to make him a king or a rich man and amass for him as much wealth as possible, he (PBBUH) rejected all this. Even when his uncle came to ask him to abandon his mission and take whatever compensation he (PBBUH) wanted, his conclusive answer was his famous statement: **“O my uncle, by Allah, even if they put the sun in my right hand, and the moon in my left hand in return for abandoning this matter (calling people to Islam), I will never abandon it until either Allah makes it (His Religion) triumph or I die in the cause of it.”**

The Prophet (PBBUH) is Offered to Have Batha' Makkah Turned into Gold

The Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) said, **“My Lord offered to make Batha' Makkah (a ravine) gold for me, but I said, ‘No my Lord, I would rather be satisfied one day and hungry one day. When I am hungry, I will supplicate You and remember You. When I am satisfied, I will thank You and praise You.’”**

“This World is Not Worth a Mosquito's Wing”

The Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) said, **“Had this world been, in Allah's Sight, equal to even a mosquito's wing, He would not have provided the disbeliever with even a sip of water thereof.”**

“Gather Me Among the Group of the Poor”

The Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) said, **“O Allah, make me live a poor one, die a poor one, and gather me (on Resurrection Day) among the group of the poor.”**

He (PBBUH) also said, **“Renounce the world and Allah will love you. Renounce what people possess, and people will love you.”**

Some of What Lady `Aishah Said About the Prophet's (PBBUH) *Zuhd*

Lady `Aishah said, "The Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) never ate his fill of bread for three consecutive days until he parted the world."

She also said, "We, the family of Muhammad (PBBUH), would go for a (whole) month without kindling a fire (for we had nothing to cook); we had only dates and water (to fill our stomachs)."

She also said, "The Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) did not leave a dinar, or a dirham, or a sheep, or a camel (as inheritance)."

The Prophet (PBBUH) Was Given the Keys of the Earth and Died While His Armor Was Mortgaged to a Jew for Thirty Measures of Barley

The Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) was given the keys of the treasures of the earth and the different countries. Taking booty was made lawful for him. The countries of Hijaz, Yemen, the entire Arabian Peninsula, and the lands close to the Levant and Iraq were conquered during his lifetime. Many amounts of one-fifth shares, *Jizyah*, and charities were brought to him. Gifts were presented to him by several provincial kings. Despite all this, the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) retained nothing of these possessions and did not keep even a dinar of them. He (PBBUH) spent them all for the use and benefit of the Muslims, enriched others through them, and strengthened the Muslims with them.

The Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) said, "**It would not please me to have as much gold as Uhud Mount and have anything left of it after the passing of three days, except a dinar that I would set aside for the repayment of a debt.**"

Once, a certain amount of dinars was brought to him and, after distributing it all, he (PBBUH) said, "**Now I am relieved.**"

The Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) died while his armor was mortgaged to a Jew in exchange for thirty measures of barley for the livelihood of his family.

Description of the Prophet's (PBBUH) Bed

His wife Lady Hafsah was asked about the bed of the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH), and she replied, "It was coarse." It was made of a woolen cloth folded into two folds, and he (PBBUH) slept on it. One night, Lady Hafsah thought of folding it into four folds to make it softer and more comfortable. So she folded the cloth into four folds and the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) slept on it. In the morning, he (PBBUH) asked her about what she had done to his bed during that night, because he had found it softer and disapproved of this. Lady Hafsah told him what she had done, and he asked her to restore it as it was before. He (PBBUH) said, **"Restore it to its former state; its smoothness prevented me from performing my prayer that night."** He (PBBUH) was referring to the *Tahajjud* Prayer (supererogatory prayer offered during the night).

3. The Prophet's (PBBUH) Generosity and Openhandedness

Despite the few possessions the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) had, his generosity was without limits. The following are some examples of his openhandedness:

The Prophet (PBBUH) Never Said "No" to Anything that Was Asked of Him

Jabir ibn `Abdullah said, "The Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) never said 'no' to anyone who asked him for anything."

The Prophet (PBBUH) Was the Most Generous in Ramadan

Ibn `Abbas said, "The Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) was the most generous giver of good of all people. He (PBBUH) was the most generous in the month of Ramadan. Jibril (Gabriel PBUH) used to meet him every night in Ramadan and recite the Qur'an with him. When Jibril met him, the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) was more generous in doing good than the blowing wind."

“Spend, and Do Not Fear from the Lord of the Throne any Decrease”

A man came to the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) and asked him to give him something. He (PBBUH) replied, **“I have nothing (left now), but buy (what you need) on my credit. When something comes, I will repay it.”** That was, the things the man needed to buy would become a debt on the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH), which he would repay when possible. `Umar witnessed this and could not bear to see the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) entering into debt, and so he said, “O Messenger of Allah, if you had something with you, you would give it to him. Allah has not burdened you with what is beyond your power.”

The Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) disliked what `Umar said. A man from the Ansar then said to him, “O Messenger of Allah, spend and do not fear from the Lord of the Throne any decrease.” The Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) smiled and said, **“This is what I have been commanded to do.”**

The Prophet (PBBUH) Giving to Al-Mu'allafatu Qulubuhum

As stated earlier, the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) gave generous shares to some recent Muslims from among *Al-Mu'allafatu Qulubuhum* (literally, those whose hearts were reconciled to Islam) after the Battle of Hunain. Greatly amazed by his generosity, Abu Sufyan said in gratitude, “You are generous in war and in peace.” He (PBBUH) also showed much forgiveness and liberality to the people of Hawazin.

Stories about the Prophet's (PBBUH) munificence are many, and there is no room in this book to relate them all.

4. The Prophet (PBBUH) Shows Patience and Forgiveness from a Position of Strength

The Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) was characterized by extreme patience and forgiveness. He (PBBUH) never sought revenge for himself unless it involved a

violation of Allah's Commandments. He (PBBUH) was very forgiving of the harm inflicted on him by his enemies.

The following are some examples of his patience and forgiveness:

The Prophet's (PBBUH) Patience with the Harm Inflicted upon Him by the Quraysh

The Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) put up with severe harm from the Quraysh, which no human could bear. They threw filth on him while he was prostrating, put thorns on his pathway, and labelled him with the worst of names. All the while, he (PBBUH) was patient and tolerant.

The Prophet (PBBUH) Does not Repay Evil with Evil or Insult with Insult

Anas ibn Malik said, "I was walking with the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH). He (PBBUH) was wearing a Najrani cloak with thick edging when a Bedouin caught up with him and pulled him violently by his cloak. I looked at the neck of the Prophet (PBBUH) and saw that the edge of his cloak has left a bruise on it because of the violent pull. The Bedouin then said, 'O Muhammad, order that I be given some of Allah's wealth that you have with you.' The Prophet (PBBUH) turned to him, laughed, and ordered that he be given something."

"Have I Been Good to You?"

Abu Hurairah said, "A Bedouin came and asked the Prophet (PBBUH) for something. He (PBBUH) gave the man something and said, '**Have I been good to you?**' The Bedouin said, 'No, you have not been good, and you have not done well.' The Muslims became angry and rose to go to the Bedouin, but the Prophet (PBBUH) gestured to them that they should hold off. Then the Prophet (PBBUH) got up and went into his house. Then the Prophet (PBBUH) sent for the Bedouin and added something to his gift and said, '**Have I been good to you?**' The Bedouin replied, 'Yes, may Allah repay you well in family and tribe.'

The Prophet (PBBUH) said, **‘You have come to us, asked us for something, and we gave it to you. You said what you said and that angered my Companions. If you like, say before them what you have just said before me so as to remove what they harbor in their breasts against you.’**”

The next day, the Bedouin came and said to the Companions what he had said to the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH). The Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) then said, **“Verily, the similitude of myself and this Bedouin is that of a man whose camel has run away. People going after it only drives it further away. Its owner shouts, ‘Leave me and my camel. I am kinder to it and know it better.’ He heads towards it and stands in front of it. He takes some sweepings from the ground and brings the camel back little by little until it comes and kneels down. He puts his saddle on it and mounts it. Verily, had I let you be at the point where the man said what he said, you would have killed him, and he would have gone to hell.”**

“O Allah, Guide My People for They Do Not Know”

On the Day of Uhud, when his people broke his front teeth and blood streamed down his face, the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) was heard saying, while wiping the blood off his face, **“How do people who besmear the face of their Prophet (PBBUH), while he calls them to their Lord, succeed?”** It was said to him, **“Invoke against them, O Messenger of Allah,”** and he (PBBUH) replied, **“O Allah, guide my people for they do not know.”**

The Poisoned Sheep

Zainab bint Al-Harith brought a poisoned sheep as a gift for the Prophet (PBBUH) to make him eat from it. Just before starting to eat from it, Allah (Exalted be He) caused the sheep to speak and tell the Prophet (PBBUH) that it was poisoned, and so the Prophet (PBBUH) left it. When Zainab bint Al-Harith was brought before the Prophet (PBBUH), he asked her what drove her to do so. She replied, **“I said to myself, if he was truly a prophet, he would be told (that the food was poisoned). And if he was a king seeking kingship, we will be rid of**

him.” People asked the Prophet (PBBUH), “Should we kill her, O Messenger of Allah?” The Prophet (PBBUH) said, “**No,**” and he (PBBUH) pardoned her.

The Universal Pardon

The Prophet’s (PBBUH) great nature of forgiveness was evident to everyone on the day he (PBBUH) opened Makkah. He (PBBUH) was driven out of his land, the most beloved of all lands to him, and was severely harmed by its people. Over the years, circumstances changed and situations shifted, and the Prophet (PBBUH) returned to his homeland in the company of more than ten thousand Muslims. The disbelievers of the Quraysh were shaken when they saw the Prophet (PBBUH) entering Makkah. The Prophet (PBBUH) said, “**O people of the Quraysh, what do you expect I will do with you?**” They replied, “Good. You are a noble brother, and the son of a noble brother.” He (PBBUH) said, “**I say to you what Yusuf (Joseph PBBUH) said to his brothers: ‘No reproach shall be on you this day.’ (Yusuf 12:92) Go, for you are free ones.**”

“I Have Been Given the Choice, and I Have Chosen”

The head of the hypocrites, `Abdullah ibn Ubai, died and the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) was asked by his son to come and offer the funeral prayer over him and beg forgiveness for him. When the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) stood up to perform the funeral prayer for `Abdullah ibn Ubai, `Umar took hold of his garment and said, “O Messenger of Allah! Are you going to offer the funeral prayer for him, even though your Lord has forbidden you to offer prayer over hypocrites?” The Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) smiled and said, “**I have been given two choices. Allah says: ‘Ask forgiveness for them, (O Muhammad), or do not ask forgiveness for them. If you should ask forgiveness for them seventy times – never will Allah forgive them.’ (Al-Tawbah 9:80) I have been given the choice, and I have chosen. Had I known that by asking Allah’s forgiveness for him over seventy times he would be forgiven, I would have done that.**”

The Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) offered the funeral prayer for him, and walked with him (his coffin), and stood by his grave until the burial was completed. Then these two Qur'anic verses were revealed: “And do not pray (the funeral prayer, O Muhammad), over any of them (hypocrites) who have died - ever - or stand at their grave.” (Al-Tawbah 9:84)

5. Description of the Prophet's (PBBUH) Bravery and Support for His People

The Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) was known for his bravery, intrepidity, and support for others. He (PBBUH) participated in all the difficult battles. While other fighters and heroes fled on more than one occasion, he (PBBUH) remained steadfast on the battlefield, advancing, standing his ground, and not pulling back.

The following are some examples of his bravery:

On the Days of Uhud and Hunain

On the Day of Hunain when the Muslims were fleeing in chaos, and the enemy were chasing after them and stabbing those they could, the unparalleled bravery and courage of the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) was evident. On his white mule, he (PBBUH) rushed directly into the torrent of the numerous enemy's men, while repeating, **“I am the Prophet, it is no lie. I am the son of `Abdul-Muttalib.”**

The Closest to the Enemy

`Ali ibn Abu Talib said, “When the fighting grew intense and the enemy overcame us, we sought shelter with the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH), and no one was closer to the enemy than him. I remember on the Day of Badr, we were seeking shelter with the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH). He (PBBUH) was the closest of us to the enemy, and he was the strongest of the people on that day.”

Fright in Madinah

Anas ibn Malik said, “The Prophet (PBBUH) was the best among the people (both in appearance and character), the most generous of them, and the bravest of them. One night, the people of Madinah became frightened at hearing a terrible sound, so they headed towards it during the night. They met the Prophet (PBBUH) coming back from the place of the sound. He (PBBUH) was riding a horse that belonged to Abu Talha, which had no saddle, and his sword was slung around his neck. He (PBBUH) had preceded the others and made sure there was no trouble. He (PBBUH) reassured the people, saying, **‘Do not be frightened! Do not be frightened!’**”

6. The Prophet’s (PBBUH) Modesty and Shyness

The Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) was the most modest and shy of all people. He (PBBUH) was the first to lower his gaze against obscenities.

The following are some examples of his modesty and shyness:

If the Prophet (PBBUH) Disliked Something, it Could be Perceived on His Face

Abu Sa`id Al-Khudri said, “The Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) was shyer than a virgin in her boudoir. If he (PBBUH) disliked something, it could be seen on his face.”

The Prophet (PBBUH) Did Not Confront People with What They Disliked

Lady `Aishah said, “When the Prophet (PBBUH) was informed of something he disliked about someone, he would not say, ‘What is the matter with so-and-so that he says such and such?’ He would say, **‘What is the matter with the people that do or say such-and-such?’**” In doing so, the Prophet

(PBBUH) forbade the bad action without naming or mentioning the person who did it.

Perfection of the Prophet's (PBBUH) Modesty

Due to the extreme modesty and shyness of the Prophet (PBBUH), he (PBBUH) did not fix his gaze on the person he was talking to. Rather, his gaze was always lowered. His sight was focused more on the ground than towards the sky. Most of his looking was from the corner of his eye (i.e., he did not stare).”

7. The Prophet's (PBBUH) Humility

The Prophet (PBBUH) was always cheerful. He (PBBUH) had an easy and lenient character. He (PBBUH) was neither hard-hearted nor coarse, nor one who shouted in the markets or spoke indecently. He (PBBUH) was the most humble of all people, and the furthest from arrogance.

The following are some examples of his humility:

The Prophet (PBBUH) Sat Where the Assembly Ended

The Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) sat wherever he found a place and used to mingle with the people. He (PBBUH) gave due attention to each person who sat with him.

The Prophet (PBBUH) Asked to Be Called 'Allah's Slave'

Ibn `Umar narrated that the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) said, “**Do not praise me excessively as the Christians praised the son of Maryam. I am no more than a slave, so say, 'Allah's slave and His Messenger.'**”

The Prophet (PBBUH) Visited the Sick and Attended Funerals

Part of the modest behavior of the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) was visiting the sick, whether a slave or a free person, and whether rich or poor. He (PBBUH)

asked the sick person about their state, placed his hand over the place they complained of, and supplicated Allah (Exalted be He) to heal them.

Another part of his modest behavior was that he (PBBUH) attended funerals to offer prayer for the deceased, bury them, and supplicate for them.

The Prophet (PBBUH) Initiated Greetings and Honored Those Who Visited Him

Anas ibn Malik narrated, “The Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) initiated greetings with those who met him and was the one who initiated shaking hands.”

He also narrated, “When he (PBBUH) shook hands with someone, he would never withdraw his hand until the other person withdrew their hand first.”

He also narrated, “Whenever any man brought his mouth close to the ear of the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) [to talk to him], he would not withdraw his head until the other man first withdrew his head.”

He also narrated, “He (PBBUH) would not cut off the speech of a person unless they deviated from what was right, in which case he (PBBUH) cut off the speech of the person by forbidding them or standing up.”

He also narrated, “The Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) honored those who visited him, and he may spread for them (a part of) his garment to sit on, and would favor them with the cushion that was under him, and adjure them to sit on it if they refused, while he himself would sit on the ground.”

The Prophet (PBBUH) Hated to Be Distinguished among His Companions

One day, the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) was travelling with his Companions and ordered that a sheep be prepared. One of the Companions said, “O Messenger of Allah, I will slaughter the sheep.” Another Companion said, “I will cook it.” And the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) said, “**I will collect the**

wood.” They said, “O Messenger of Allah, we will spare you the work.” He (PBBUH) replied, **“I know you can spare me (work), but I hate to be distinguished among you. Allah hates to see His servant distinguished among his Companions.”**

The Prophet (PBBUH) Jokes with His Companions

Part of the Prophet’s (PBBUH) humility was that he joked with his Companions, and he only spoke the truth.

The following are some examples of his joking with his Companions:

“No Old Woman Enters Paradise”

Al-Hasan narrated that an old woman came to the Prophet (PBBUH) and said, “O Messenger of Allah, supplicate Allah for me to grant me entry into Paradise.” He (PBBUH) said, “O mother of so and so, no old woman enters Paradise.” The woman went away crying. So, the Prophet (PBBUH) said, “Tell her that she will not enter Paradise while she is old.” Allah the Exalted, says, “Verily, We have created them (maidens) of special creation. And made them virgins. Loving (their husbands only), equal in age.” (Al-Waqi`ah 56:35-37)

The Prophet (PBBUH) Gave Nicknames to His Companions

The Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) used to give nicknames to his Companions to create a jovial atmosphere. He (PBBUH) gave `Uthman the nickname ‘`Uthaim’ and called Anas by the nickname of ‘Unais.’ He (PBBUH) also called them by the names most beloved to them.

`Ali Eats the Dates with the Stones

`Ali ibn Abu Talib brought some dates and sat down to eat them with the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH). Whenever `Ali ate a date, he placed the stone close to the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH). When he had finished eating all the dates and all the stones were heaped by the side of the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH),

`Ali jokingly said to the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH), “I am astonished at you, O Messenger of Allah. You ate all the dates.” The Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) smiled and said, **“I am astonished at you, O Ibn Abu Talib. You eat the dates with their stones (or as he PBBUH said).”**

The Prophet (PBBUH) Had Fun with Kids

Anas said, “The Prophet (PBBUH) used to mix with us to the extent that he would say to a younger brother of mine, **‘O Abu `Umair, what did Al-Nughair (his sparrow) do?’**”

In the hadith, Anas narrated how the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) used to be kind and have fun with his Companions. He (PBBUH) even had fun with their little brothers and used to soothe them when they were upset. He (PBBUH) was simple and spontaneous with them. Anas had a little brother named Kabsha. He had a kind of bird like a sparrow with which he used to play. The sparrow died, and his brother felt so sad about it. The Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) learned the cause of his sadness, and he had fun with Anas’s little brother to humor him and pacify him. Although he was a little boy, he nicknamed him ‘Abu `Umair,’ and said to him, **“O Abu `Umair, what did Al-Nughair (his sparrow) do?”**

The Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) kindly tried to cheer up the little child using the merry rhythm between the boy’s name and that of the little nightingale.

8. The Prophet’s (PBBUH) Loyalty and Honesty

Before being entrusted with the mission, the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) was known as *‘Al-Sadiq Al-Amin* (the Truthful and the Honest),’ and he (PBBUH) remained so after the mission. All the *Mushrikin* used to trust him and committed their precious belongings to his care. Even during the time in which they did not believe in him, still they signaled him out for the safekeeping of their belongings.

When he (PBBUH) started his emigration to Madinah, he asked `Ali ibn Abu Talib to remain in Makkah for three days to return the entrusted belongings to their owners.

The Prophet's (PBBUH) Extreme Loyalty to Kadijah

Whenever something was presented to the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH), he (PBBUH) used to say, **“Take this to the house of so and so woman, because she is a friend of Khadijah! Take this to the house of so and so woman for she used to love Khadijah!”**

The Prophet's (PBBUH) Loyalty to Those Who Were Kind to Him

On the Day of Badr, the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) said to his Companions, **“I have come to know that some men from Banu Hashim and others have been forced to come out. They do not want to fight us. Therefore, whoever encounters anyone from Banu Hashim (in the battlefield) should not kill him. Whoever encounters Abul-Bakhtari ibn Hisham should not kill him. Whoever encounters Al-`Abbas ibn `Abdul-Muttalib (the Prophet's PBBUH paternal uncle) should not kill him, for he has been forced to come (with the pagan army).”**

This was a direct order from the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) to show kindness to those who had showed kindness to them, out of gratitude and loyalty to Banu Hashim for their acts of solidarity towards them during the thirteen years they stayed among them in Makkah, and for the men among them who lobbied on the Muslims' behalf and pressured the Quraysh into annulling the boycott and tearing up its harsh document that forced the Muslims to stay in the mountain pass of Abu Talib during the siege that lasted for nearly three years.

9. The Prophet's (PBBUH) Fear of Allah and His Crying

Despite the blessings with which Allah (Glorified be He) honored the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH), and His Promise of bestowing higher blessings on

him on the day of meeting with Him, the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) was the most fearful of Allah (Exalted be He) and the most obedient to Him.

“If You Knew What I Know”

Therefore, the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) said, **“If you knew what I know, you would laugh little and weep much.”**

The Prophet (PBBUH) Used to Pray until His Feet Became Swollen

The Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) used to pray (night prayer) until his feet became swollen. He (PBBUH) was asked, “Do you do this even though Allah has forgiven you your past and future sins?” He (PBBUH) said, **“Should I not be a thankful slave?”**

The Prophet (PBBUH) Used to Observe Much Fasting

Lady `Aishah said, “The Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) was constant in his deeds (if he did something, he would do it consistently). Who among you can endure what the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) used to endure?”

She said, “He (PBBUH) used to fast to such an extent that we thought that he would never break his fast; and he would go without fasting to such an extent that we thought he would never fast.”

The Prophet (PBBUH) Used to Cry a Great Deal at Hearing the Qur’an

Ibn Mas`ud said, “The Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) said to me, **‘Recite the Qur’an to me.’** I said, ‘O Messenger of Allah, shall I recite the Qur’an to you when it has been revealed to you?’ He (PBBUH) said, **‘I like to hear it from others.’** So, I recited to him until I reached Allah’s Saying, **‘How (will it be) then, when We bring from each nation a witness and We bring you (O Muhammad) as a witness against these people?’** Then I raised my head and saw tears falling from his eyes.”

`Abdullah ibn Shikhkhir narrated from his father that he said, “I came to the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) while he was praying, and there was a sound coming from his chest, like the bubbling of a cauldron.”

10. The Prophet’s Mercy (PBBUH)

The talk about the Prophet’s (PBBUH) mercy is inexhaustible. He (PBBUH) showed compassion and mercy to all of Allah’s creatures. Allah (Exalted be He) described him with these qualities in several places in the Noble Qur’an, including the following:

“And We have not sent you (O Muhammad) except as a mercy to the worlds.” (Al-Anbiya’ 21:107)

“Verily, there has come unto you a Messenger (Muhammad) from amongst yourselves (i.e., whom you know well). It grieves him that you should receive any injury or difficulty. He (Muhammad) is anxious over you, for the believers (he is) full of pity, kind and merciful.” (Al-Tawbah 9:128)

“And by the Mercy of Allah, you dealt with them gently. And had you been severe and harsh-hearted, they would have broken away from about you; so, pass over (their faults), and ask (Allah’s) Forgiveness for them; and consult them in the affairs. Then when you have taken a decision, put your trust in Allah; certainly, Allah loves those who put their trust (in Him).” (Al-`Imran 3:159)

Lady `Aishah said about him, “Whenever the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) was given the choice between two things, he would choose the easier one as long as it was not sinful. If it was sinful, he would be the furthest of the people from it.”

His Mercy was for all creatures from the day of his birth until the day he (PBBUH) joined the Most Exalted Companion – and to the Day of Resurrection.

Following is an exploration of the different stages of the Prophet's (PBBUH) life and the aspects of mercy in every stage:

The Prophet's (PBBUH) Birth

Halimah Al-Sa`adiyah came from the outskirts to Makkah seeking to work as a wet nurse for the children of the noble Makkan families. Her milk had dried up and her camel was skinny and dry, but as soon as she carried in her arms the mercy that Allah (Exalted be He) sent to the worlds, her condition changed. Her breasts filled with abundant milk. The Prophet (PBBUH) drank until he was satisfied. When she offered him her other breast, he refused, as if he wished to save it for his foster brother (Halimah's son), who also drank his fill.

The Prophet's (PBBUH) mercy encompassed Halimah, her family, and her entire tribe. The moment his feet trod the barren land of Banu Sa`d, rain poured down and the land became green.

From the Age of Ten to the Age of Twelve

The People Ask for Rain Clouds with the Prophet's (PBBUH) Face

When they were experiencing a drought, the Quraysh said to Abu Talib, the Prophet's (PBBUH) uncle, "The valley has become arid, and the children are parched. Come and ask Allah for rain." Abu Talib came out with a boy - meaning the Prophet (PBBUH) - looking like a sun that came out of darkness from behind a cloud, with some other boys around him. Abu Talib took the boy (PBBUH) and fixed his back to the Ka`bah and the boy raised his hands to the sky, while there was not a cloud in the sky. Then clouds came from here and there, and they poured down water and kept pouring until the valley and the hills were filled and became fertile.

Abu Talib said about this, "A white one, who they ask for clouds with his face, the one who is there for the orphans and a protection for the widows."

The summing up of this story is that when the drought intensified, and people wanted to beseech Allah (Glorified be He) for rain, they brought the Prophet (PBBUH), who was still a little boy and showed signs of blessings. His uncle would make him stand with his back to the Ka`bah and his face turned to the sky. Shortly thereafter, clouds gathered and drops of rain began to fall and people obtained abundant rain after a period of severe drought.

The Prophet (PBBUH) at the Age of Twelve

At the age of twelve, the Prophet (PBBUH) accompanied his uncle Abu Talib on a trading trip to Al-Sham region (Greater Syria or the Levant). During this trip, before the caravan reached Busra (a town in southern Syria), a monk there named Bahirah noticed that, unusually for that time of the year, a single cloud had come across the clear blue sky. The cloud soared over and even pursued the caravan. It dispersed only when the caravan entered a shady area. The learned monk knew, based on Christian scriptures, that among these travelers was the Awaited Messenger as foretold in their books. He (PBBUH) was a mercy to those who accompanied him. The cloud shaded him and offered shade to those with him.

The Prophet (PBBUH) at the Age of Thirty-Five

The Quraysh decided to rebuild the Ka`bah after its walls became cracked and riven and were about to collapse. They divided the Ka`bah into parts and assigned to each tribe a part to earn the honor of participating in building the Ka`bah. When the construction work reached the stage of replacing the Black Stone, they differed over who would have the privilege of placing it back in its place. The conflict started and continued until it was about to turn into a fierce battle of which only Allah (Exalted be He) knew the extent. At just the critical time, Abu Umayyah ibn Al-Mughirah suggested they appoint the first person to enter the mosque as a judge between them, and they accepted his suggestion.

That first person was the mercy that Allah (Exalted be He) sent to the worlds: Messenger Muhammad (PBBUH). Once they saw him, they cried out, "*Al-Sadiq*

Al-Amin (the Truthful and the Honest). We accept him as judge.” After telling him what had happened among them, he (PBBUH) asked to be brought a piece of cloth. He (PBBUH) placed the stone in the middle of the cloth and asked the conflicting members to each hold one edge of the cloth and lift it up together. When they reached the place where it was to be reinstalled, he (PBBUH) took it with his honorable hands and put it back in its place. Thus, the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) prevented a civil war that could have consumed everything.

The Prophet (PBBUH) at the Age of Forty

At the age of forty, the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) started receiving divine inspiration and the passages of the Noble Qur’an, which was the greatest mercy that Allah (Glorified be He) ever bestowed upon His servants to guide them and lead them on the straight path.

After Being Entrusted with the Message of Islam

The Hostility that the Prophet (PBBUH) Endured from the Quraysh

The patient endurance shown by the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) throughout his stay among the Quraysh has been discussed in detail in previous parts of this book.

At Al-Ta’if

After the leaders of Banu Thaqif incited the rabble, children, and slaves of Al-Ta’if to chase out the Prophet (PBBUH), Allah sent down Angel Jibril (PBBUH) to inform him that He (Exalted be He) had sent to him the Angel of the Mountains to make Al-Akhshabain (two huge mountains flanking Makkah) fall upon them. The response of the merciful Prophet (PBBUH) to this was, **“No. But I hope that Allah will bring forth from their progeny people who will worship Allah alone, without associating anything (any partner) with Him.”**

During the Journey of Ascension to Heaven

When the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) was taken up to *Sidrat Al-Muntaha* (the Lote-Tree of the Utmost Boundary) and stood in the presence of his Lord, he said, “**All salutations (reverence), all prayers, all good things are due to Allah.**” Allah (Exalted be He) replied to his greeting with, “Peace be upon you, O Prophet, and the Mercy of Allah and His Blessings.”

In this answer, Allah (Exalted be He) specially selected Prophet Muhammad (PBBUH) for this great honor: peace, mercy, and blessings from Him. Such an immense honor was never granted to anyone else other than Prophet Muhammad (PBBUH), neither before nor after him. The Messenger of Allah (PBBUH), the mercy that was sent to the worlds, did not keep this honor just for himself; he (PBBUH) shared it with his followers when he said, “Peace be upon us and all the righteous servants of Allah.” These phrases form the beginning of *Al-Tashahhud*¹, also known as *Attahiyat* (Salutations), that is repeated by Muslims in their prayers each day.

During the Prophet’s (PBBUH) Battles

There were many events that took place and have been mentioned in the appropriate places in detail. Prophet Muhammad (PBBUH) was very merciful towards his Companions who disobeyed his orders in the Battle of Uhud. He (PBBUH) showed mercy and compassion to his enemies when he supplicated Allah (Glorified be He) for them, saying, “**O Allah, guide my people for they do not know.**” Additionally, there were several other previously mentioned situations.

¹ Testimony of Faith, also known as *Attahiyat* (Salutations); it is recited in the sitting position in the second/last unit of prayer. Tashahhud forms an integral part of the prayer, without which the prayer is invalid. Its formula can be translated as follows: “All salutations (reverence), all prayers, all good things are due to Allah. Peace be upon you, O Prophet, and the Mercy of Allah and His Blessings. Peace be upon us and all the righteous servants of Allah. I testify that there is no god but Allah, and I testify that Muhammad is His servant and His Messenger.”

The Prophet's (PBBUH) Action Towards the Man Who Urinated in the Mosque

While the Companions were in the mosque in the company of the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH), a Bedouin came and began to urinate in the mosque. The Companions said to him, "Stop! Stop!" but the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) said, **"Do not interrupt him; leave him alone."** So, they left him alone until he had finished urinating, then the Messenger of Allah (PBBUH) called him and said to him, **"These mosques are not suitable places for urine and filth. They are only for the remembrance of Allah, prayer, and recitation of the Qur'an."**

He (PBBUH) then gave orders to one of the people, who brought a bucket and poured water over it.

The Prophet (PBBUH) Shortened His Prayer When He Heard the Crying of an Infant

Anas ibn Malik narrated that the Prophet (PBBUH) said, **"I start the prayer with the intention of prolonging it, then I hear the crying of an infant and I shorten my prayer because I know how much its crying will incite the passions of its mother."**

The Prophet (PBBUH) in His Home

The Prophet (PBBUH) was the most compassionate to his family. He (PBBUH) said, **"The best of you is he who is best to his family, and I am the best among you to my family."**

The Prophet's (PBBUH) Mercy Towards His Enemies

The Prophet's (PBBUH) mercy was not limited to the believers in him or his followers alone. His mercy included his opponents and those who disbelieved in him. Allah (Exalted be He) inflicted His Punishment upon every people who antagonized His previous messengers, either by sending down violent winds,

floods, lightning, or thunder, except for the enemies of Messenger Muhammad (PBBUH). Regarding them, Allah (Exalted be He) said:

“And (remember) when they said, ‘O Allah! If this (the Quran) is indeed the truth (revealed) from You, rain down stones on us from the sky or bring on us a painful torment.’ And Allah would not punish them while you (Muhammad) are among them, nor will He punish them while they seek (Allah’s) Forgiveness.” (Al-Anfal 8:32-33)

So, the presence of the Prophet (PBBUH) among the disbelievers of the Quraysh was a mercy to them also. Truly, he (PBBUH) was sent as a mercy to the worlds.

The Prophet’s (PBBUH) Mercy Towards Inanimate Beings

The Prophet’s (PBBUH) mercy extended to inanimate beings. It was related that when he (PBBUH) built his mosque, he (PBBUH) had no pulpit to stand on. He (PBBUH) preached to people while leaning against a palm-trunk close to his prayer place. After the mosque was enhanced, a three-step pulpit was built for him.

On the first day the Prophet (PBBUH) stood on it, the Companions noticed that he (PBBUH) descended from it hurriedly and went to the palm-trunk. He (PBBUH) caressed it with his noble hands and was filled with mercy and compassion for it. When he (PBBUH) was asked about what he had done, he (PBBUH) said, **“If I had not embraced it, it would have continued to grieve until the Day of Resurrection.”**

Such was the Prophet’s (PBBUH) mercy and compassion towards inanimate beings. He (PBBUH) never passed by a stone or tree, but that he heard it say, ‘Peace be upon you, O Messenger of Allah.’

The Prophet's (PBBUH) Mercy Towards Animals

The Prophet (PBBUH) was full kindness and mercifulness towards animals. It was narrated that a hungry cat came to his door, so the Prophet (PBBUH) brought a vessel and carried it to the cat and did not remove it until it was satisfied, out of mercifulness to it.

It was also narrated that on the Day of Al-Hudaibiyah, the Prophet (PBBUH) was accompanied by more than fourteen hundred men. When they passed by a dog that had given birth to a litter of puppies, the Prophet (PBBUH) noticed the panic that the dog experienced on seeing this big assemblage of people, so he (PBBUH) ordered his men to take another path, which was the longest, in order not to disturb the dog and its babies.

The Prophet (PBBUH) at His Death

When the pangs of death became stronger, the Prophet (PBBUH) turned to Allah (Exalted be He) in supplication, saying, **“There is no god but Allah. Death has its agonies. O Allah, help me with (i.e., patiently endure) the agonies of death. If there is pain, make it my portion and make it easy for my followers.”**

The Prophet's (PBBUH) mercy encompassed all his followers. As described by the scholars, the departure of the soul and the pangs of death become the easiest they can be for believers, as a drop is spilled from a cup full of water.

On the Day of Resurrection

The Prophet's (PBBUH) mercy was not limited to his followers during his lifetime. Every prophet will be asked on the Day of Resurrection to intercede for the people, and every one of them will respond with, “Myself! Myself!” except for Prophet Muhammad (PBBUH). He (PBBUH) will prostrate himself under Allah's Throne and continue to pray and supplicate to Allah with His Beautiful Names until Allah has pity on him and says to him, “Raise your head, O

Muhammad, and say, you will be heard; and intercede, your intercession will be accepted.” The Prophet (PBBUH) will say to him, **“I will not be satisfied while someone from my *Ummah* (followers) is in the Fire.”** Allah (Exalted be He) will accept his intercession and pardon his followers. May the peace and blessings of Allah be upon you, O Mercy to the worlds.

These are a small portion of the prophetic traits, and brief outlines of his perfection and his noble qualities. As for the Prophet’s (PBBUH) true qualities and characteristics, none know their true nature except Allah (Glorified be He).

All peace and blessings be upon you, O Messenger of Allah. Peace, honor, and glory be upon you.

I testify that you conveyed the message, fulfilled the trust, advised your followers, and removed the distress, and we are among those who bear witness.

O Allah, raise him to the praiseworthy status that You have promised him. You never break a promise.

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